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CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States parties due in 1996

Addendum

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

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I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

A. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

1. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed by the representative of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 5 September 1991 and was ratified in March 1994 by the Islamic Consultative Assembly on a "reservation" basis. Iran has reserved the right not to apply any provisions or articles of the Convention that may be in contravention with domestic laws and Islamic standards. On 15 June 1994 the Islamic Republic of Iran acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child by expressing this general "reservation", and the Convention has become binding on Iran from 12 August 1994. In cases where domestic laws strongly differ from the articles of the Convention, they could be revised, provided that they do not contradict the principles of the Sharia (Holy Laws).

B. Definition of a child (art. 1)

2. According to figh (religious jurisprudence) and the law a child or minor is a male or female offspring that has not attained maturity. Maturity is a natural and instinctive matter. One of the signs of attaining maturity is age. In figh and the law a person who has not reached the age of majority is called a minor. A minor cannot dispose of his/her property. Iranian law does not offer any definition of a child and only the age of maturity is defined. According to the provisions of article 1210 of the Civil Code, the age of maturity for male children is full 15 lunar years. The legislator in Iran has stipulated that a person has to prove his/her maturity before being able to exercise his legal rights. If two conditions, that is, physical growth and mental development, are combined in an individual then it could be said that the age of minority has ended.

3. According to the Civil Code, a mature person has the right to dispose and possess his/her property. Therefore, according to the provisions of the law, in legal actions by the child in relation to transactions or other affairs that require rational decisions, the maturity of the person needs to be proven. Since in accordance with the Civil Code marriage before age of maturity is forbidden (art. 1041) and the age of maturity, determined by law, is not compatible with the realities of the society, some jurists have proposed revision of the Civil Code provisions relating to the age of maturity.

4. To exercise legal rights, the Legislator stipulates different ages as follows:

(a) According to article 79 of the Labour Act persons under the age of 15 are forbidden to be employed. Regarding agricultural work, although this kind of work is considered to be lighter than other work and is usually done as part of family work, the Law on Agricultural Work sets the minimum age at 12 years. (These age limits are in conformity with ILO standards.) Also, according to the Single Article Act passed on 3 February 1968 anyone hiring a child under the age of 12 may be sentenced to a prison term from six months to

one year and a 5,000 to 50,000 rial fine. In case of repeated offence the culprit may be sentenced to three years in prison and payment of 300,000 rials in damages;

(b) According to article 2 of the Public Military Service Act boys who enter the age of 19 from 21 March are eligible for military service the same year. Girls in the Islamic Republic of Iran are exempted from military service;

(c) In accordance with article 49 of the Islamic Penalties Act passed in 1982, "children shall be free from criminal responsibility and the responsibility for correction, education and disciplining is given to the guardian, and if necessary the court will instruct a correction house to carry out this task";

(d) According to laws and regulations, education of Iranian children and adolescents is compulsory and no one can deprive them from education (article 1 of the Act on Providing Means and Possibility of Education for Iranian Children and Adolescents, 1974). Compulsory education begins at the age of 6;

(e) Minimum age to vote in elections in accordance with the Elections Act is 16 years.

5. The population of children under 14 in the Islamic Republic of Iran (1991 Census) is 24,723,875. Some of the statistics for children are as follows:

Table 1. Population by major age group and gender

Description	Total	Boys	Girls
Children under 1 year	1 020 936	524 927	496 009
Children 1-4 years	6 163 024	3 164 108	2 798 916
Children 5-9 years	8 481 875	4 324 165	4 157 680
Young children 5-19 years	980 676	4 622 473	4 458 203
Youth 5-19 years	7 115 547	3 579 875	3 535 672

Source: Population Census 1991

Table 2. Ratio of literate population, 6 years and older, by age group and gender

Description	Urban inhabitants		Rural inhabitants	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Children 6-10 years	2 490 286	2 393 265	1 615 745	1 542 694
Young children 11-14 years	2 217 606	2 112 999	1 350 848	1 242 340
Youth 15-19 years	2 145 197	2 056 218	1 291 375	1 211 591

Source: Population Census 1991

Table 3. Percentage of 6-19 age group in school, by age group and by urban and rural areas

Description	Inhabitants of urban areas	Inhabitants of rural areas
Children 6-9 years	94-04	87.04
Young children 10-14 years	94-06	76.09
Youth 15-19 years	63.06	33.09

Source: Population Census 1991.

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Non-discrimination (art. 2)

6. The principles embodied in paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on ensuring the rights of the child against all forms of discrimination are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (arts. 19 and 20). In keeping with the objectives of article 2 of the Convention the Islamic Republic of Iran organized a seminar and exhibition on the Image of the Girl Child in the Islamic Republic of Iran in February 1995 with the collaboration of the Bureau of Women's Affairs of the President's Office and financial support from UNICEF and UNFPA.

7. At this seminar a report on the situation of the girl child in different provinces of the country was presented, messages of children to the world communities were read in Farsi and Latin and the projects "School Mayor" and "School Health Workers" were introduced. In the exhibition part of the seminar, which was attended by 23 government agencies and non-governmental organizations, tournaments were held in the fields of handicrafts, and intellectual, research, sports and theatrical activities. In general, the goals of the seminar and exhibition can be summarized as a survey and a review of achievements and progress relating to the girl child in the Islamic

Republic of Iran, exploring ways of improving her status and raising public awareness on the need to change negative and un-Islamic attitudes and prejudices toward girls, their rights and role in society.

8. For the purpose of raising awareness about the importance of adolescence and presenting recommendations on improving the health of adolescent girls, a workshop was held in Tehran in December 1996 on "Health of Adolescent Girls" by the Liaison Network of NGOs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and UNICEF.

B. Best interest of the child (art. 3)

9. The parents have an obligation to respect the moral and material rights of children. In the Islamic Republic of Iran parents have the primary responsibility to secure the rights of the child. The Civil Code puts the responsibility for maintenance and upbringing of the child on parents and the father has the responsibility for expenses relating to the sustenance of the child before and after birth. Other laws on the protection of children are as follows:

The Law on Protection and Health Care of Children Against Diseases (articles 5, 10, 11 Ministry of Health Act);

Provision of Health Care Services for Formula Feeding (Islamic Penalties Act, art. 26);

The Law on Provision of Means and Facilities of Education of Iranian Children and Adolescents;

The Law on Development of Public Education (approved on 10 September 1988);

The Law on Education of Workers' Children (articles 2 and 3 of the Labour Code).

10. Children's health, as an important part of public health, has a significant impact on the enhancement and maintenance of the physical and psychological and social health of society. The health services have a definite role in the improvement of the general nutrition of children, particularly infants, as well as in preventing diseases and increasing physical and intellectual creativity, and as a result contributing to economic and social development. Development of a dynamic health and treatment network plays a decisive and valuable role and complements the efforts of other sectors in the enhancement of social and economic well-being. Considering that physical, psychological and social health are among the natural rights and basic needs of people and that this important matter has been explicitly stipulated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education hopes that it will be able to take more effective steps in reducing maternal and child mortality by using its available resources. It is noteworthy that 7.26 per cent of the total national budget has been allocated for this purpose.

11. Considering the performance and operational capacity of provincial administrations and taking into account the quantitative objectives of family health, the quantitative goals of the Second Economic and Social Development Plan for 1994-1998 are as follows:

(a) Vital indicators:

(i) Reduction of the under-five mortality rate from 33 per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 22 by the end of 1998;

(ii) Reduction of infant mortality (under one month) from 20 per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 12 by the end of 1998;

(iii) Reduction of the maternal death rate due to pregnancy complications from 46 per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 29 in 1998.

(b) Disease indicators:

(i) Reduction in the under-five mortality rate from diarrhoea from 11 per cent in 1991 to 5 per cent in 1998;

(ii) Reduction in child deaths from acute respiratory infections from 17 per cent in 1991 to 6 per cent in 1998;

(iii) Reduction of the incidence of eye and ear disorders among students from 15 per cent in 1991 to 6 per cent in 1998;

(iv) Halving the iodine deficiency incidence by 1998.

(c) Nutrition indicators:

(i) Increase the incidence of birth weight of 2.5 kg and above from about 92 per cent in 1991 to 98 per cent in 1998;

(ii) Reduce the proportion of children zero to five years from 12.5 per cent for boys and 20 per cent for girls in 1991 to 6 per cent for boys and 11 per cent for girls in 1998;

(iii) Increase the proportion of infants breast-fed for at least one year from 66 per cent in 1991 to 90 per cent in 1998.

(d) Coverage:

(i) Increase vaccination coverage for neonatal tetanus from 60 per cent in 1991 to 78 per cent in 1998;

(ii) Increase coverage of pregnant and lactating women from 23 per cent in 1991 to 60 per cent in 1998;

(iii) Increase coverage for children under six from 37 per cent in 1991 to 63 per cent in 1998;

(iv) Increase coverage of students 6-14 years from 50 per cent in 1991 to 75 per cent in 1998.

12. National Immunization Days were held on 12 April and 16 May 1994 by the Coordination Task Force for National Mobilization for the Eradication of Polio. The mission of the Task Force was polio immunization for children under five years, who have the highest incidence of polio. The holding of National Immunization Days was a remarkable achievement for the nation. The programme was carried out with political support and by mobilizing all national and government resources and the participation of all segments of population. In one day 9 million children in urban and rural areas were vaccinated and 10 million packets of iodized salt were distributed among households. The immunization coverage of polio at the national level was so high that WHO, at a meeting in Tunis, described it as 100 per cent coverage.

13. To safeguard the interests of children with working mothers, the Government has made it mandatory for all government agencies to establish nurseries and day-care centres that provide hot meals and other amenities. To realize the provisions of article 78 of the Labour Code on the need to establish care centres for the children of workers, many such centres have been established and staffed with qualified instructors. Factories and plants shall also establish such centres if they have more than five women employees. To reduce the educational, cultural and health gap between rural and urban children, the Welfare Organization has established rural child-care centres. The responsibility for caring, feeding and educating children between 3 and 5 rests with Rural Welfare Complexes.

14. To realize the principles set forth in articles 21 and 29 of the Constitution concerning protection of families without a head of household, providing services to children and adolescents, rehabilitation of the handicapped and maintenance and care of children without a guardian, the Welfare Organization has established 80 day and night units nationwide to care for children deprived of effective protection. The Welfare Organization was designated in 1986 as the authorized organ to issue licences for the establishment of private child-care centres. Its rules of procedure were drafted in 1988 and approved by the Minister of Education and Director of the Welfare Organization.

15. Since correct upbringing and care of the child are in the child's best interest, which are made possible by a good relationship between the parents and a solid family foundation, the courts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, pursuant to article 1168 of the Civil Code concerning parental responsibility on the raising of the child, and taking into full account the best interests of the child, do their best to arrive at a compromise between the parents.

16. For better planning, formulating policies and coordination in the establishment and launching of Advisory Centres and implementation of the decisions of the High Youth Council, the Coordination Council for Advisory Centres was established with the following functions and powers: policy-making and setting priorities for the establishment of Advisory Centres; planning for the purpose of establishing and strengthening government and private Advisory Centres; coordination and guidance of Advisory Centres.

17. For the purpose of education and guidance of families, Family Schools will be established at provincial centres. Parents will receive instructions on the education of children and the rights and obligations of spouses. These schools have already been established in two provincial capitals on a pilot basis and by March 1997 all provincial centres will have such schools. From next year other cities will also have them.

C. Right to life and survival and development (art. 6)

18. Paragraph 1 of article 6 of the Convention regarding the obligation of States parties to recognize that every child has the inherent right to life is embodied in articles 956, 957 and 958 of the Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These articles stipulate that "capacity for enjoying rights begins with the birth of a human being and ends with his/her death". In accordance with the provisions of the Civil Code, the foetus, before birth and during the embryonic phase, enjoys all that a human being is entitled to, provided that it is born alive, and even if it dies after birth. It is noteworthy that the child during the foetal stage enjoys life and the law protects its rights. Thus, it can be concluded that the right to life, survival and development begins from the embryonic stage and the law considers that phase as the beginning of life. Thus, protection of the right to life takes place at two phases: before birth and after birth.

1. Protection before birth

19. Since the child before birth and at the embryonic stage is not an independent being and depends on its parents for nutrition and since his/her growth is directly related to the nutrition and health of the mother, the law, according to paragraph 2 of article 22 of the Civil Code, obligates the Government to protect mothers, especially during pregnancy and nursing. This protection includes various aspects of health, nutrition, insurance and social security. Further, the mother also has an obligation to take the necessary measures so that the health of the child during pregnancy and after birth is not jeopardized. These measures, among other things, include the obligation to prevent tetanus by vaccinating herself before marriage (Law on Mandatory Vaccination against Tetanus, April 1988). In case of separation of the mother from her husband during pregnancy, she must refrain from remarrying until the birth of the child (arts. 1153-1154, Civil Code).

20. Among other factors that seriously harm the life of the child before birth are inappropriate spacing of births, numerous pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, the physical inability of the mother to bear children and lack of family planning. In keeping with the First Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan, Iran has begun the work of preparing a population policy of which the family planning is an essential component. The main objective of the Government is to "enhance the health of society and reduce maternal and child mortality, to abolish all incentives for population growth and to take appropriate measures to limit births at national level". This programme emphasizes enhancing the general knowledge of the population, especially girls, and including women and mothers in family planning of the Ministry of Health. Since its inception, the Government has pursued this objective seriously.

21. The most important legal protection during pregnancy relates to abortion. Contrary to some countries where abortion is legal, in the Islamic Republic of Iran abortion is illegal and a punishable offence. The Islamic Penalties Act provides punishment of imprisonment for a person helping to commit an act of abortion (arts. 622 and 624) and for aborting a foetus the law stipulates payment of dieh (blood money).

2. Protection after birth

22. The child needs care and the attention of parents from the moment of birth. Breast-feeding the child is among the first protective measures. According to religious regulations and the law the mother is not obligated to breast-feed her child, but if there is no other way to feed the child, the mother must feed her child with her milk (art. 1176, Civil Code). Both spouses have a responsibility for the raising and upbringing of the child. Payment of maintenance expenses of the child, before and after birth, is the responsibility of the father.

23. To eradicate syphilis, which has disastrous consequences for children, the law has provided safeguards for them. Article 10 of the Act concerning Prevention of Venereal and Contagious Diseases (1941) stipulates that a syphilitic woman who is aware of her disease or suspects that her disease is contagious and infectious, and with that knowledge breast-feeds a healthy child belonging to someone else, shall be deemed guilty and sentenced to prison or payment of a cash penalty. Should such a child be affected by the disease as a result of being breast-fed, the woman shall be deemed guilty and on conviction thereof, a more severe punishment shall be meted out to her. The same punishment shall be applied to the person who knowingly gives a child affected by syphilis to a healthy woman to breast-feed it if the woman is afflicted by the disease as a consequence.

24. Article 11 of the said Act, for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the baby who is breast-fed by someone other than the mother, provides that any person who wishes to engage the services of a wet nurse is required to secure the opinion of a physician, through a medical examination, as regards the health of both the child and the wet nurse so that it may be ensured that neither is affected by syphilis. In case of violation, the guilty party shall be punished.

25. Whenever a mother commits a crime and enforcement of the punishment would affect the child's condition, the mother cannot be punished. Article 262 of the Islamic Penalties law stipulates that a pregnant woman who is convicted of a crime and the punishment prescribed for her is lex talionis, judgement cannot be enforced before the birth of the child; after delivery of the child, if the punishment destroys the child, the said judgement must be suspended as long as the risk of death of the child exists. Likewise, article 91 of the above Act stipulates that during pregnancy and childbirth, the prescribed punishment (Hadd) for murder or lapidation will not be enforced. Furthermore, should the baby have no guardian or protector after birth and there is the risk of its death, the same rule applies.

D. Respect for the child's opinion (art. 12)

26. The child who is capable of forming his or her own views and attains the power of discernment can express those views and wishes and the parents or the child's guardian should give due weight to the child's views within the limits of his or her best interest. The High Council of Youth is charged with the responsibility of providing a conducive environment for the development of the youth's personality and to find ways of combating customs and traditions prejudicial to the youth. Article 20 of the Terms of Reference and Regulations of the High Youth Council underlines the importance of interactions and exchanges of views among the youth. Some provisions of this article are as follows:

(a) Finding scientific and practical methods to foster exchanges of views and interaction of ideas and thoughts with a view to providing a conducive environment for ensuring the intellectual development of the young generation;

(b) Guiding and protecting the young generation in exercising the right to express their views and thoughts.

27. Children are free to express their views provided the exercise of this right is not contrary to their best interest, and according to the law they have the right to be heard in any judicial proceedings. This right is exercised by the natural or legal guardian. The child has the right to appear in court with the guardian or parents or any other person designated by the public prosecutor. According to the Single Article Act on Appointment of Guardian (1937), if the claimant in a lawsuit happens to be a minor child, and if the child does not have parents or a guardian, a legal guardian is appointed by the public prosecutor. If designation of a legal guardian causes a waste of time or is detrimental to the interests of the child, the public prosecutor must appoint a temporary guardian so that the latter may collect the necessary evidence and lodge a complaint on behalf of the child.

III. CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

A. Name and nationality (art. 7)

28. Article 993 of the Civil Code stipulates that the birth of each child and the abortion of a foetus six months after conception shall be reported to the Department of Personal Status within the time and manner prescribed by laws or special procedures. Further, article 997 of the Civil Code provides that every person must have a surname.

29. The Personal Status Registration Act (1976) stipulates that every child must have a given name and a surname. Selection of titles or ranks as well as designations that are lewd or inappropriate for the gender of the child are forbidden. The surname of a child, pursuant to the note to article 41 of the Personal Status Registration Act, is the family name of the father.

30. The legal grace period for the announcement of the birth of a child is 15 days as of the date of birth. After the expiration of the prescribed period, if the fact of birth is not recorded, those who are legally bound are

considered as violators of the law and, pursuant to article 3 of the Law on Contravention, Crimes and Punishments concerning Registration of Personal Status enacted by the Council of Expediency (August 1991), will be prosecuted. In case of conviction the violator shall be liable not only for registration of the birth but also for payment of a fine.

31. Pursuant to article 16 of the Personal Status Registration Act, declaration of birth shall be carried out by the following persons: father; mother in the absence of a father, at the earliest time she is able to perform the duty; paternal grandfather; court-nominated guardian, or executor, or trustee; persons who are legally bound to care for the child; the official or representative of the institution charged with the custody of the child.

32. In case none of the above persons proceed to declare the birth for registration purposes, when the child reaches the age of majority, he/she will be personally responsible to report to the Department of Personal Status Registration and obtain an identity card. If a child is born in an institution such as a penitentiary or a correction house or the like, the authorities of such institutions must, pursuant to the note to article 18 of the Registration and Personal Status Act, declare the fact of birth and make the necessary arrangements for the recording of the birth.

33. In accordance with article 13 of the Personal Status Registration Act, the fact of birth in Iran is recorded by the official of the Department of Personal Status Registration and in foreign countries it is recorded by the Iranian Consular Officers in an appropriate document of birth. Recording the birth of those children whose parents' marriage is not solemnized, pursuant to the note under article 16 of the Personal Status Registration Act, declaration of the fact of birth and execution of the documents relating thereto are the joint responsibility of the mother and the father.

34. If it is not possible to acquire the agreement of the father and the mother regarding declaration of the birth of the child, for example if one of them is not available, or one of them disagrees with regard to the blood relationship of the child, the identity card will be issued upon the application of one of them specifying the given name of the absent party. If the parents of a child are not known (in case of an abandoned child), the birth document will be issued with an arbitrary surname in the city where the child has been found. The arbitrary nature of the name of the father and mother shall not be reflected in the identity card of the child. In accordance with article 18 of the Personal Status Registration Act, the representative or official of the Department of Personal Status Registration who records the birth of the parentless child is required to report the circumstances to the Public Prosecutor's Office of the court of first instance.

35. It is understood that if an identity card is issued with an arbitrary name, and thereupon the real parents of the child are found, the Department of Personal Status Registration is required to correct the identity card pursuant to the court decision or the document of partition of succession, or the affidavit drawn up in conformity with article 1273 of the Civil Code.

36. In accordance with article 22 of the Personal Status Registration Act, if a child dies during birth, or dies immediately after birth, his death must be officially announced and recorded. In this event, the physician or the licensed midwife who has been present during birth is required to certify the process. In case there is no licensed midwife, the testimony of two witnesses suffices for registration purposes. If the circumstances of death are dubious, a burial licence shall be issued after an autopsy.

37. Concerning paragraph 1 of article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 976 of the Civil Code provides that the following persons are regarded as Iranian nationals:

(a) All persons residing in Iran except those whose foreign citizenship is established; foreign citizenship is considered to be established if their documents of nationality have not been objected to by the Government of Iran;

(b) Those whose fathers are Iranian whether they were born in Iran or outside Iran;

(c) Those persons born in Iran of unknown parents;

(d) Those persons born in Iran of expatriate parents, one of whom was born in Iran;

(e) Persons born in Iran of a father of expatriate nationality who have resided at least one year or more in Iran immediately after attaining the full age of 18. In other cases their naturalization as Iranian citizens will be subject to the naturalization regulations prescribed by the law;

(f) Every foreign national that acquires Iranian citizenship;

(g) Every woman of foreign citizenship who marries an Iranian national.

B. Preservation of identity (art. 8)

38. According to article 8 of the Convention, States parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference. In addition to article 20 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran which clearly provides that all persons shall enjoy all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights, the Civil Code and the case-law ensure the rights of the child including his or her identity, nationality, name and family relations. In order to establish a relationship between the child and a family and so that the family will be able to provide material and moral support to the child, it is necessary to register the name of the child in his or her identity card.

39. In accordance with article 12 of the Personal Status Registration Act, the surname of the child is the same as that of his/her father, even if the identity card of the child is issued in a different jurisdiction of the Department of Personal Status Registration. Furthermore, according to

article 41 of the aforementioned law, children who have reached the age of maturity can choose another surname. The birth of any child in Iran, whether the mother or the father is Iranian or a foreign national, should be declared to the representative or the officer of the Department of Personal Status Registration.

40. Regarding the nationality of the child, article 41 of the Constitution stipulates that Iranian nationality is the indisputable right of every Iranian and the Government is not allowed to deprive an Iranian of his nationality, unless at his own insistence or having accepted the nationality of another country. The Iranian child also enjoys this right. Although the nationality of the Iranian child is that of his/her father, the child has the right of choice and after reaching the age of maturity he/she can choose another nationality in accordance with the relevant regulations.

41. Cultural growth and development and perfection of the creative powers and potentials of the child and enhancing his/her evolving capacities to better understand the imperatives of contemporary times are among the goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The use of local and ethnic languages in the press and for mass media and the teaching of their literature are allowed for national and ethnic groups (article 15 of the Constitution). This is very important for preservation and survival of the cultural and national heritage of Iranian nationals, especially children belonging to national groups.

C. Freedom of expression (art. 13)

42. The preamble to the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection before as well as after birth". Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran recognizes within Islamic principles and culture that the child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds. Thus, use of the print media to the extent that it is not injurious to the evolving personality of children and adults is allowed. The Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents, numerous Cultural Houses, the High Council of Youth, Roshd magazine and other similar publications are useful and effective for the intellectual development and enhancement of the evolving capacities of children. Moreover, article 24 of the Constitution states that the press and publications are free in their writings unless such writings are detrimental to the foundations of Islam or the rights of the people.

D. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14)

43. The Iranian Constitution recognizes and guarantees the principles and rules set forth in article 14 of the Convention. Articles 12 and 13 of the Constitution, while recognizing Islam as the State religion, also states that Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian Iranians are recognized religious minorities who are free within the jurisdiction of the law to perform their religious services and may act according to their religious laws as far as their personal status and religious teachings are concerned.

44. The right to freedom of conscience is respected in Islamic Republic of Iran. In this respect, article 23 of the Constitution states that "Inquisition into people's opinion shall be forbidden and no one shall be offended or brought to account merely for having a certain opinion." As stated in paragraph 3 of article 14 of the Convention, the aforementioned freedoms are subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

45. Paragraph 3 of article 3 of the Constitution states that the Government shall provide people with free education at all levels and facilitate wider public access to higher education. Free public education facilitates discharge of the responsibility of parents in enhancing the evolving capacities and potentials of children.

E. Freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (art. 15)

46. Articles 26 and 27 of the Constitution guarantee freedom of association and assembly within the framework of the law. Considering the general aspect of this provision, the freedom is guaranteed to both children and adults. According to article 26 of the Constitution, "Parties, associations, political groups and trade unions and Islamic and recognized religions, minorities, [and] societies are free, provided they do not violate the principles of independence, liberty, national unity and Islamic standards and the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. No person shall be forbidden nor forced to participate in any of them."

47. Participation of children in recreational camps, visits to cultural and historical sites, holding of classes at Cultural Houses and attendance of children at Centres for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents, and so forth provide clear proof that not only such gatherings exist, but they receive the support of the Government. Participation of Iranian children and youth at international science competitions (olympiads) is in line with this general policy.

F. Protection of privacy (art. 16)

48. Article 25 of the Constitution states that "Inspection of letters or failure to deliver them, tapping telephones and disclosing telephone conversations, divulging telegrams and telexes, censoring or failure to send or deliver such messages, eavesdropping or any inquisition into other people's private affairs shall be forbidden, unless otherwise provided by law." Article 648 of the Islamic Penalties Act also forbids disclosure of confidential private information by those who are privy to such information by reason of their profession. The provisions of this article apply to all people of Iran, including children.

G. Access to appropriate information (art. 17)

49. In respect of the principles and ideals set forth in article 17 of the Convention, States parties ensure that the child has access to information. In the Islamic Republic of Iran there is no limitation on access to information by children, unless the information and material are forbidden in

accordance with the laws and moral and cultural norms. The major organs in the country that are involved in dissemination of information are: Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents, Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic Broadcasting, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, National Libraries Organization, Welfare Organization, and Computer Information Centre of the High Council of Youth. These establishments provide national and international information for children and young people through mass media on various occasions and special days such as religious festivities, International Children's Day, International Day for the Disabled, Blind and Deaf Day, Mentally Handicapped Day, Book Weeks, Basij Day, Teachers Week and so forth.

50. As for the print media, there are magazines exclusively dedicated to children and young people: Aftabgardan (Sunflower), Omid Enghelab (Hope of Revolution), Omid Ayandeh (Future Hope), Ayandeh Sazan (Future Makers), Children Soroosh, Children Kayhan, Hezar Gheseh (Thousand Stories), Zamzam (Arabic), Zamzam (English), Alhoda, and Gol Agha.

51. The House of Young Journalists that was established with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Ministry of Education, the National High Council of Youth, the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents and families of young journalists makes it possibile for children and young people to express their views and opinions through such activities. This "House" publishes three magazines for children: Children and Adolescent Literature, Study of Children and Young Adult Literature, and Khane (Home). In addition, it holds painting and handicraft exhibitions for children, and children's arts and culture festivals.

52. The Ministry of Education, with respect to article 17 of the Convention, organizes different activities, including:

(a) Establishment of an information centre to research projects relating to family issues in general, and children in particular;

(b) Cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting for production of language instruction programmes;

(c) "The Voice of Teacher" radio programme answers questions by students and their parents on educational matters. This is a daily radio programme by teachers and qualified experts from 4 to 8 p.m.;

(d) Educational and recreational programmes for the enhancement of young people;

(e) Cooperation with Aftabgardan newspaper, an exclusively children's paper, in matters relating to education, particularly for young students;

(f) Cooperation with the World Health Organization through participation of students in world painting competitions for educational purposes. In 1994, with the theme of "Hygiene of Mouth and Teeth", and in 1995, with the theme of "World without Polio", and in 1996, with the theme "Healthy Life in Healthy City", Iranian students won a number of prizes;

(g) Publication of health books exclusively for children with such titles as Health Message, Children Heart Care, Tips on Hygiene and Nutrition.

53. Iranian students have participated in numerous science olympiads and competitions. One such competition was a conference held in Shiraz in 1984 in which 90 math and physics students participated. This conference was in fact the first foundation stone for math competitions which later led to the presence of Iranian students at the World Mathematics Competition in Cuba in 1987. In its first international presence, Iran won a silver medal. This success was a strong motive for the evolution of physics, chemistry and computer olympiads.

54. In 1995 the 36th Mathematics Olympiad, 27th Chemistry Olympiad and 26th Physics Olympiad were held. Although in these tournaments the results are on the basis of points scored by individuals, not countries, Iranian students succeeded in receiving medals both on an individual and country basis. In the four aforementioned olympiads Iranian students won eight gold, eight silver and four bronze medals. Iran ranked first in the 1995 tournaments in chemistry, third in physics, fifth in computer science and eighth in mathematics.

55. The holding of science olympiads in the country has increased the number of participants in these competitions, enhanced their level of knowledge and attracted more talented students to study basic sciences. Moreover, the presence of the winners of olympiads in mathematics, physics, electrical engineering and computer science has contributed greatly to the level of quality and has imparted fresh and positive momentum among basic science teaching staff and their students.

56. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has also published a magazine, Shokoofeh (Blossom), since 1994 with the aim of enhancing the educational and cultural level of workers' families. This magazine has a special section exclusively for children that aims to contribute to the betterment of children's education and also fill their leisure time.

57. Activities of the Council of Children's Books (a government organ) in relation to the promotion of children books (from June 1994 to June 1995) are as follows:

(a) Review of published works on children and young adults in 1994 and 1995, preparation of an analytical report on the current situation of children's books, publication of lists of good books in print, and awarding plaques of appreciation to writers of children's books;

(b) Publication of the 21-volume Encyclopedia of Children and Young Adults, one of the most important cultural activities, with the aim of publishing a comprehensive and reliable reference source for children and youth as well as for those adults dealing with this age group;

(c) Review of the needs of and publication of materials for handicapped children and young adults, including publication of Braille books for the blind, examining the needs of the deaf and the mentally retarded for books, and deliver of cultural services to hospitalized terminally ill children;

(d) Establishment of libraries for children and young adults who are in special circumstances, including establishment of libraries in Tehran Correction Centre in September 1995; establishment of five libraries in cities hosting Iraqi and Afghani refugees with the help of UNHCR (in Jahrom, Semnan, Rafsanjan and Bardsir);

(e) Holding of meetings and training workshops for the purpose of making children familiar with children's and young adult's books, on introduction of good literary works, on reading and infants, reading in the family, and on encouraging young people to write;

(f) Cooperation with international bodies in exchange of information on children's literature and introduction of children's literature and works of Iranian writers for translation and publication.

58. Public libraries that are affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance have carried out the following activities in collaboration with other domestic organizations:

(a) Establishment of numerous libraries in urban areas;

(b) Establishment of libraries in rural areas with the collaboration of the Ministry of Jihad for Construction with special emphasis on rural children and with the aim of promoting book-reading habits;

(c) Library services, in collaboration with the Welfare Organization, for the disabled and the blind with particular emphasis on children and youth;

(d) Establishment of children's sections in public libraries of cities where the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents has no library;

(e) Allocation of 40 per cent of the budget for the purchase of books to children's books.

59. Furthermore, the Welfare Organization has arranged language instruction programmes for children of religious minorities and children who speak indigenous languages. These programmes need better support and planning. The Welfare Organization prevents the publication of materials and information that are harmful for the mental health and happiness of children and create fear, anxiety and disappointment.

60. Policy-making in the sphere of cinema in the Islamic Republic of Iran takes into view Islamic norms, tenets and culture, in such a manner that the implications of these policies and norms encompass all audiences, including

children. In this respect, the Young Cinema Society of Iran produced 45 films in 1994 and won the best story film award at the Young Cinema Festival. The Society was also recognized as the best documentary film producer.

61. Furthermore, Farabi Cinema Foundation has produced 34 films, participated in many domestic and international children's film festivals, and has won numerous awards at international film festivals.

H. The right not be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 37 (a))

62. In accordance with the Civil Code, "custody of the child is both the right and duty of the parents". The child should obey his parents and comply with their logical and rational guidance, and try to be a good and useful person for his/her family and the society.

63. The Islamic Republic is a system of government based on faith in the nobility and sublime value of man and liberty and his responsibility before God. Thus, Muslims and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have an obligation to deal with people of other faiths and their fellow brethren on the basis of Islamic equity and justice and respect their human rights. Accordingly, the Islamic system is based on good conduct, justice, and enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. In this respect, and especially for more vulnerable children who need protection, the legislator has contemplated provisions for those who cause physical and psychological harm to children and certain punishments are envisaged.

64. In accordance with the Law on Aggravation of Punishment of Abductors of Persons, any person who abducts another person, by fraud or threat, for the purpose of extortion or revenge or for any other unlawful purposes shall be sentenced upon conviction to a prison term ranging from 2 to 10 years and if the victim is a child below 15 years of age the punishment shall increase to from 3 to 15 years. In the event that the victim dies or disappears due to abduction or is subjected to sodomy or rape, the guilty person will be sentenced to capital punishment.

65. Although in accordance with the Civil Code (art. 1179) the parents have the right to punish their children, they cannot mete out excessive punishment. To protect the rights of the child and to ensure that this right of parents is exercised within limits, the Islamic Penalties Act underlines that punitive actions by parents should be within the norms of corrective action and should not cause any bodily harm to the child. Also, in accordance with article 484 of the Islamic Penalties Act, infliction of any stroke that causes a change of colour of the skin should be indemnified by payment of dieh (blood money). These provisions emanate from Islamic principles on the upbringing of children and their purpose is to limit punitive and corrective actions against children. The purpose of such punitive action is solely for the better upbringing of children. Furthermore, corporal punishment of children in schools by the staff is forbidden.

IV. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE

A. Parental guidance (art. 5)

66. In the Islamic Republic of Iran the family has the primary responsibility for human development and enhancement of the cultural, moral and social values of children. The general direction of all laws and national plans of the country is toward facilitating the establishment of a family and strengthening its foundation. In accordance with article 1104 of the Civil Code, the two spouses should cooperate in raising their children. Moreover, article 43 of the Constitution underlines the need for provision of housing, food, clothing, health, education, and the possibility for formation of a family.

67. In keeping with article 5 of the Convention on the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents, in Iran the guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child should provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance. In this connection and for the purpose of better guidance of parents, counselling and family advisory centres have been established nationwide. The guardian of the child can also participate in programmes of the Parents and Teachers Association. This Association offers educational programmes, within the framework of Islamic laws, for parents on the rights of the child.

68. The Parents and Teachers Association of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a non-profit and non-governmental organization. This Association is established with the support of those who are interested in the education of young people. Family education classes for the guidance of parents have been held on the following subjects throughout the country: appropriate treatment of children; physical and mental health of children; relations between parents; psychology.

69. The Welfare Organization has taken the following actions in relation to parental guidance:

(a) Publication of the periodical Let's teach our children;

(b) Holding of monthly lectures for managers of child-care centres with a view to informing them about children's rights;

(c) Sending educational experts and experts in the prevention of disabilities to urban and rural areas for raising awareness of parents;

(d) Holding of educational meetings for parents, dissemination of relevant pamphlets and books, production of radio and television programmes, production of educational videos and feature films;

(e) Implementation of the plan "Education of Parents to Prevent Mistreatment of Children" with the cooperation of UNICEF.

70. The Welfare Organization held a conference and carried out a number of programmes on 6-8 October 1996 in commemoration of International Children's Day and for the purpose of attracting the attention of Government and other

authorities and raising awareness on children's issues. On the day of the conference (7 October), in addition to many performances, some government officials also delivered speeches on the rights of the child.

B. Parental responsibilities (art. 18, paras. 1 and 2)

1. Hezanat

71. In the religious laws of Islam, taking care of and educating the child is referred to as Hezanat (child custody). The Iranian Civil Code, which emanates from Islamic jurisprudence, in this respect relies on the provisions of religious jurisprudence sources. In accordance with article 1168 of the Civil Code, "custody of the child is both the right and duty of the parents". The custody of the child entails under the law the use of all necessary means for survival, growth, physical and mental health, and in general, anything that is required for the child because of his/her age. According to the Civil Code, in the event of separation of parents, if the child is male, he will remain under the custody of the mother for two years and afterwards the custody of the child will pass to the father. In the case of a female child, she will remain under the protection and custody of the mother until she is seven years old. Payment of the maintenance for the child is the responsibility of the father. Guardianship rests with the father and paternal grandfather; the mother has less responsibility in this regard.

72. Some of the provisions of the Civil Code relating to parental responsibilities are as follows:

(a) Article 1171: in the event of the death of one of the parents, guardianship of the child will devolve upon the parent who is still alive, even though the deceased is the father of the child and has nominated a legal guardian for the child;

(b) Article 1172: neither of the parents can refrain from maintaining the child during the period he/she is legally responsible for custody. If he/she fails to perform his/her duty, the court, at the insistence of the other party or the guardian or one of the relatives or public prosecutor, will direct him/her to take up the custody. If such decree is not enforceable, the court shall direct the custody at the expense of the father, and if the father dies, at the expense of the mother;

(c) Article 1175: the child cannot be taken away from the parents or from the mother or the father to whom custody is entrusted, unless for lawful reason;

(d) Article 1180: a minor child is under the guardianship of its father or parental grandfather. Such is also the case for the immature child, provided immaturity or mental unfitness continues from the age of minority;

(e) Article 1184: if the natural guardian of the child is unworthy of the administration of the state of his ward or if he misappropriates property, the court will, on application of the child's relatives or on the request of

the public prosecutor who has to be a party to the suit, and after establishment of the incapacity or dishonesty of the guardian, assign a financial trustee to work with the natural guardian;

(f) Article 1186: in cases where strong indications exist showing dishonesty of the natural guardian in respect of the estate of his ward, the public prosecutor is obliged to apply to the court of first instance requesting his actions to be investigated. The court will examine the complaint and will act according to article 1184 if his dishonesty is proved.

73. In case there is no guardian or executor, pursuant to article 103 of the Act concerning Non-litigious Matters, the trustee appointed by the competent court shall represent the foetus in partition of the estate. Upon distribution of the estate, the administration of the share of the foetus will be carried out by the trustee as long as the infant is not born.

2. Education

74. Article 1178 of the Civil Code stipulates that "parents are required to the extent of their means to make the necessary arrangements for the education of their children". The parents should cooperate with each other for the upbringing and education of their children. In accordance with article 1104 of the Civil Code, "Both spouses are obliged to cooperate with each other for the well-being of the family and education of their children." Education of the child consists of the learning of social customs and mores and moral and religious values compatible with the family environment of the child and the knowledge or techniques necessary for the time, place and social environment of the child in such a way that he/she may later find a useful occupation in society and lead a decent life.

75. According to the Islamic faith the responsibility for the upbringing of the child rests with the parents and the Government should help them fulfil this responsibility. Article 21 of the Constitution provides that the Government shall guarantee women's rights in every respect with due observance of the Islamic precepts and shall proceed to:

(a) Create a favourable atmosphere for upgrading the personality of women and restoration of their material and spiritual rights;

(b) Assign a competent court to protect the existence and survival of the family;

(c) Provide widows, the aged and unprotected women with insurance facilities;

(d) Protect mothers, especially during pregnancy and nursing, and also orphaned children;

(e) Entrust worthy mothers with the guardianship of children with a view to ensuring the latter a happy future, in case there is no legal guardian.

76. Issuance of permit by the Welfare Organization for the establishment of private child-care centres with a view to supporting parents and the education of children, and a two-hour daily leave for working mothers to feed their infants without deducting from their annual leave allowable are among other facilities provided for the upbringing and raising of children. Also, a Single Clause Act has been approved for the well-being of working mothers by which all employers that have women employees are obliged to establish nurseries and day-care centres or pay a part of the cost relating to child-care centres used by women employees. Pregnancy leave has been increased from three to four months.

C. Separation from parents (art. 9)

77. In respect of paragraph 1 of article 9 of the Convention on separation from parents against the will of children, it should be noted that such separations rarely take place in the Islamic Republic of Iran due to cultural and religious attachments. Children have special attachment to their parents and this attachment is not severed under normal circumstances, except in rare cases such as those involving abuse of the child by parents (for example), for narcotics trafficking, immoral activities, neglect by parents of their children. In such cases parentless children are placed in the institutions managed by the Welfare Organization, NGOs and charitable bodies. In certain cases when because of the best interest of the child the court has no choice but to separate the child from his/her parents so as to protect his/her physical and social safety, some families, in addition to the aforementioned institutions, volunteer to care for these parentless children. The Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran plans to establish institutions for the care of parentless children.

78. Regarding article 9, paragraph 2, the courts in the Islamic Republic of Iran recognize the best interest of the child in litigation involving children, and close relatives are invited to the court to present their views on the best interest of the child. Since age of maturity is one of the conditions for the parties to a lawsuit, children are personally exempted from being party to a litigation, but the parents or guardian can attend proceedings on their behalf. The provisions of the Civil Code stipulate that the female child shall remain under the protection and custody of the mother until she is seven years of age and the male child until two years of age, provided maintenance expenses are paid by the father.

79. In accordance with article 1174 of the Civil Code, "if the parents of the child do not reside in the same place due to divorce or any other reason, either one of them who is not charged with the custody of the child, is entitled to visit the child". The time and place of visit or other issues of the case are decided by the competent court. Also, in article 1182 of the Civil Code it is specified that either the father or the paternal grandfather may appoint an executor to take care of and attend to the education of the child after his death and administer the child's financial affairs.

D. Family reunification (art. 10)

80. The Islamic Republic of Iran poses no restriction for applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave the country for the purpose of

family reunification. But a separate passport for the child is not issued and the permission of the parent is required as prescribed by the Passport Law. If the child does not have a father the Prosecutor General can decide about the relationship of the child and the family and provide facilities for the family reunification.

81. Paragraph 2 of article 10 of the Convention while respecting national laws calls on States parties to respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country and to enter their own country and such a right shall be subject only to such restrictions that are necessary to protect national security. Taking this point into account and the fact that in the Islamic Republic of Iran sentimental and emotional issues are given much weight, Iran does not have any problem with provisions of this article.

E. Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11)

82. The Islamic Republic of Iran enforces the Law concerning Aggravation of Punishment for Traffickers of Persons across Borders and Use of Children for Trafficking of Illicit Drugs. To this end, Iran has concluded bilateral agreements and in cases of illicit transfer of children returns the child that has been brought to Iran illegally. There is no punishment for children in such cases but a commitment is received from the parents of the child or his/her close relatives to be more careful with their child.

F. Recovery of maintenance for the child (art. 27, para. 4)

83. The provisions of this paragraph are taken into account in the preliminary investigations by the court. The person applying for the custody of the child should prove that he/she has the financial capacity and can secure the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. Also, in accordance with article 1199 of the Civil Code, maintenance of children is the responsibility of the father and in case of the death of the father or his inability to sustain the child, the responsibility devolves upon the paternal grandfather. In the absence of father or grandfather on the paternal side, or their inability to provide maintenance, the duty rests on the mother. In the event that the mother is deceased or is not able to sustain and support the child, the responsibility shall rest upon grandfathers on the maternal side, and grandmothers and paternal grandmothers who are sufficiently well off to pay for the child's maintenance. In case a number of grandparents have similar status in degree of consanguinity, the maintenance and support expenses shall be borne by all of them in equal portions.

84. According to the definition in article 1204 of the Civil Code, nafagheh (child maintenance expenses) includes the means of living, dwelling, clothing, food, and furniture to the extent of mere necessities, and contingent upon the means of the person who provides the maintenance and support. Medical and schooling expenses also constitute part of the maintenance. In cases when parents do not have financial capacity to maintain their children, there are institutions such as the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee and Mostazafan Foundation that provide material assistance and support programmes.

85. Imam Khomeini Relief Committee had 4.7 million people under its support programmes in 1995 of whom 33 per cent were children and young adults. Of the total of 1.5 million children covered by these programmes, 936,000 (60.5 per cent) were girls, 611,000 (39.5 per cent) boys. A total of 5.2 per cent of all children and adolescents in the country are covered by this institution of whom 38.8 per cent are orphans and parentless children. Of the 1.5 million children under the protective umbrella of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, 1,030,000 (66.5 per cent) are from rural areas, and 517,000 (33.5 per cent) from urban areas. About 45,000 of these children suffer from at least one sort of disability.

G. Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)

86. According to article 20 of the Convention, a child deprived of his or her family environment shall be entitled to protection and assistance by the State. Recognizing the importance of family environment and its positive contribution to the proper development of the child, in the Islamic Republic of Iran much effort is made to ensure that the child continues to live in a family environment. However, where the safety or the physical, psychological, moral and social health of the child is at risk, the Government and relevant organizations provide protection, temporarily or permanently, in special centres, and within applicable laws and regulations find socially and morally qualified families with which to place the child. In this respect, legal sanctions are enforced in these centres for the purpose of protecting the rights of parentless children and creating economic, social, and emotional security and meeting the current and future needs of children. The Welfare Organization is the competent body that takes care of these children. It establishes specialized committees that place these children in foster or adoptive families, taking into account their social, cultural, moral and economic status.

87. According to Islamic principles, if a child for whatever the reason cannot remain with his or her parents, he or she is given to one of the relatives, and in case there is no paternal relative, there are private places where children can be placed:

(a) Nursery. This is a place where parentless children from infancy to five years of age are placed and cared for on a 24-hour basis. In the 10 nurseries operating in provincial centres there are more than 465 infants and children;

(b) Day and Night Protection Services Complex. This is a place within the Urban Protection Services Complexes where children above the age of five are cared for, on the basis of separation by gender and 24-hour service, until the time they reach the legal age of maturity and are qualified to be released. The ceiling for the number of children that can be accepted in these units is nine. There are 38 such units nationwide which protect about 500 children;

(c) Independent Day and Night Centre. This is an independent institution for children from 12 years to legal age that operates under the direct supervision of the Welfare Organization for the purpose of providing

for the physical, emotional and social needs of children. The ceiling for the number of children in these 24-hour units is 30. The total number of such independent units nationwide is 19 and they cover 561 children.

88. Some families in Iran volunteer to raise and care for three to five children under the protection of the Welfare Organization like other members of their own family. This method of foster parents is mostly for girls up to 13 years of age who are without parents and relatives. About 10 to 14 children without guardians accepted by the Welfare Organization are placed with a committed family and can acquire their personality development within a family environment. So far, 5 houses for 51 girls have been established.

89. The objectives of protecting children in these 24-hour units are as follows:

(a) Maintenance, care, upbringing and guidance of children who are suffering from problems resulting from lack of parents or parental or guardian abuse, and creation of a conducive environment for their development;

(b) Providing necessary facilities for the protection of the family and preventing the breakup of families;

(c) Promotion of a healthy and sound society and prevention of social maladies resulting from lack of family environment and parental or guardian abuse;

(d) Teaching required skills to children with a view to enabling them to lead an independent life and alleviating their dependence on such a 24-hour protective environment;

(e) Creation and consolidation of an appropriate environment that is conducive to the child's development and similar to family environment with a view to realizing the qualitative goals of the new system of upbringing and development of the child by utilizing the material and moral resources of the Welfare Organization and volunteer forces;

(f) Preparing children to enter the society, enhance their self-reliance and imparting necessary motives for continuation of education, conscription in military service, employment and, finally, marriage and the formation of family.

H. Adoption (art. 21)

90. Adoption is accepted in the Islamic Republic of Iran under the title of guardianship. Children may be put under the tutorship and supervision of a competent family by a judicial decree and in accordance with the Act Concerning Protection of Children Without Parents. Article 1 of this Act provides that "every wife and husband residing in Iran can take care of a child upon mutual agreement and in accordance with approval of the court and pursuant to the regulations and relating to child supervision (adoption)". Thus, applicants residing outside Iran cannot apply for adoption.

91. Since the family is a sacred and important institution in the Islamic Republic of Iran, tutorship and supervision (adoption) may be assumed only by a husband and wife and single persons are precluded legally from accepting this responsibility. The intention of this law is to provide a family environment for children who are deprived of the privilege of having a compassionate family and caring parents. The request for supervision and tutorship of a child, pursuant to article 3 of this Act, must be jointly prepared and submitted to the court. The intention of the legislator in this respect was to prevent adoption substituting for formation of a family. Also, paragraph 3 of the Act concerning the Authorization of Compliance with Personal Status of Non-Shiite Iranian by the Courts (1933) provides that with respect to adoption the usage and established laws in the religion of the adoptive father or mother who adopts the child shall be complied with.

I. Periodic review of placement (art. 25)

92. The Islamic Republic of Iran recognizes the principles embodied in this article. If the court considers the applicants (both spouses) legally qualified and competent, it will, upon securing the approval of the institution where the child is institutionalized or the person who has temporary care of the child, issue a provisional and probationary order allowing the couple to supervise and tutor the child for six months. During this probationary period the Department of Social Assistance maintains contact with the couple and the child and keeps general supervision over the family. After six months, if the adopting parents still insist on their application and the physical and mental health of the child is satisfactory on the basis of the report of the relevant social worker, the court will issue the judgement of adoption upon receiving the necessary assurances that maintenance and education expenses of the child will be provided until he or she reaches the age of maturity (even in case of the death of the spouses). Before delivering the child to the applicant for adoption all necessary medical and psychological examinations on both the family and the child are performed.

J. Protection from abuse and neglect (art. 19), physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

93. In addition to the provisions of articles 1172 and 1173 of the Civil Code mentioned earlier, article 4 of the Act concerning Provision of Means of Education of Iranian Children (approved 1974) states that the father or mother who prevents his or her child (under 18 years of age) from completing secondary-level education or does not enroll the child at school is guilty of an offence. Furthermore, if as a result of neglect by the father or mother in the upbringing of a child damages are caused to others, the guardian of the child can be held accountable (article 7 of the Civil Liabilities Act). Accordingly, damages to the child, if caused as a result of neglect, are also the responsibility of the guardian.

94. The Directorate for Cultural and Prevention Affairs of the Welfare Organization has carried out activities directly or indirectly for the purpose of raising public awareness about the rights of the child. These programmes are as follows:

(a) Public education on the social health of children and adolescents;

(b) Holding of International Children's Day with the theme, "Children, Creativity and Society";

(c) Organizing pavillions and seminars with the theme of "Creative Children, Future Creators";

(d) Publication of educational brochures (15,000 copies), on the themes of the role of family in prevention of social deviations of children, open talks with wives and husbands on family health, the time of adolescence, how we can have a happy family, ways to overcome inhibitions, self-confidence, accepting role models, a few words on rewarding, etc.

95. For the purpose of preventing social ills, a number of programmes have been designed in collaboration with "Healthy City Council", affiliated to the municipality, to promote the health of children and adolescents. Some of the programmes in this respect are:

(a) Establishment of family guidance and counselling services;

(b) The Voice of the Counsellor of the Welfare Organization provides an opportunity for callers to discuss their marital, sexual, legal, psychological, educational, professional, economic, social, physical and health problems. In 1995, 9,548 callers under 18 years of age contacted the Voice of the Counsellor. Of this number 1,195, or 12.5 per cent, were children below 6 years of age; 1,991 persons, or 18.8 per cent, were 6-10 years of age or elementary-level school age; 1,538 persons or 16.1 per cent, were at guidance level (11-13 years); and the rest, 5,024, or 52.6 per cent, were in the 14-18 age group or secondary school age. Studies show that the largest number of problems (3,596, or 37.7 per cent) relate to upbringing and relations with other people at the individual level. Next in importance is educational problems (1,889 persons, or 19.8 per cent) and psychological problems (1,857, or 19.4 per cent).

V. HEALTH AND BASIC WELFARE

A. Survival and development (art. 6, para. 2)

96. This matter was explained earlier under "the best interest of the child".

B. Disabled children (art. 23)

97. The Welfare Organization is the responsible body for welfare and rehabilitative services for children. In this respect, it does its utmost to expand support services and public facilities, and also pays subsidies to the private sector to create a balance in supply and demand. At present, families with disabled children are supported financially and through special centres rehabilitative services are offered to disabled children and families with disabled children. It also assists in offering vocational and employment placement services as well as drawing up the required regulations, such as allocation of a 3 per cent share of employment for the disabled and the plan for employment of the disabled, which includes young persons under 18, facilitating their entry into society.

98. Education of blind and deaf children and providing services compatible with their conditions take place through Family Centres and the Centre for Blind and Deaf Children. This programme helps establish a relationship between the child and the family, and ultimately the society, and prepares children for a normal and decent life. Counselling and social services, directly or via telephone, for the purpose of resolving the problems of children, and improvement of educational systems and genetic consultations for the prevention of disabilities constitute another important part of the activities for the protection of children.

99. With the establishment of a school for exceptional children 70 years ago, special attention is being paid to this group of children. The Exceptional Education Organization covered in the 1373/74 school year (Iranian calendar, equivalent to 21 March 1994 to 21 March 1995) more than 55,200 exceptional children and students with the help of 10,000 qualified experts. In 1374/75 it had 60,006 students with 12,185 qualified teaching and administrative staff. In 1375 the total number of exceptional school classes reached 7,370 and the number of schools was 825. In 1375 the gender distribution of exceptional students were 39.6 per cent girls and 60.4 per cent boys. Gender distribution of personnel in exceptional education in 1375 was 7,366 females and 4,819 males. Moreover, distribution of exceptional children, on the basis of educational levels, is as follows:

Table 4. Exceptional children, by educational level

Level	Preparatory	Elementary	Vocational	Guidance	Secondary (Current system)	Secondary (Previous system)	Technical High School	Total
Number	12 366	41 867	705	317	608	616	672	60 004
Percentage	20.6	69.78	1.17	5.3	1.01	1.02	1.12	100

C. Health and health services (art.24)

100. Considering the priority the State attaches to the well-being of children and its investment for raising healthy, able and productive human beings, Iran can claim that with the expansion of its health network the ground is laid for delivery of health services. Important factors for the success of primary health care services in the Islamic Republic of Iran lie in the political commitment of the Government, efficient and correct management, national planning for the development of a health services delivery network and use of indigenous human resources, an information and statistics-dissemination system as an appropriate means of evaluation, the integration of various health activities in the primary health-care system, the active participation of medical universities and the support of international agencies such as UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA.

101. The health-care network begins at the rural and Health House level where behvarz (health workers) work, continues in rural health and treatment centres consisting of general practitioners, midwives and dentists, and ends in university hospitals. More than 13,000 Health Houses, 2,100 Rural Health and

Treatment Centres and 1,850 Urban Health Centres are presently active throughout the country. In these centres, child health services and services for other members of the family are offered free.

102. Immunization Programme. In Iran immunization is one of the most successful components of primary health care. This programme began in 1983 and its goals are:

(a) To raise the coverage of under-one-year-old children with the aim of reducing cases of and deaths from neonatal tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, polio, measles and tuberculosis;

(b) Raising the coverage of immunization against tetanus for women of child-bearing age with a view to eliminating neonatal tetanus. Statistics for 1983 show that less than 3 per cent of pregnant women were vaccinated against tetanus and the level of immunization against the aforementioned six diseases among children reached a maximum of 36 per cent. Pursuant to the implementation of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI), according to the latest statistics in 1995, these levels for the different antigens are as follows:

BCG	99.1 per cent;
TOPV	97.4 per cent;
DTP (3)	97.4 per cent;
Measles	95 per cent;
Hepatitis B	18 per cent;
Maternal tetanus	82 per cent.

103. The reported cases of neonatal tetanus have ben separated from reports on adults. The cases reported show the effectiveness of the programme and corroborate the achievement of 1 case of tetanus per 1,000 live births at shahrestan (district) level. This report shows that the Islamic Republic of Iran has achieved goals for the year 2000. Moreover, the high coverage of vaccination against measles, the existence of an effective cold chain, the programme of injection of vaccines at 9 months and 15 months, and timely vaccination have caused a considerable reduction of reported cases of measles and have reduced deaths from this disease to practically zero in 1994. Measles is under full control in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

104. The health personnel have gone through comprehensive training for the implementation of EPI, and since 1991 focus has been placed on strengthening follow-up mechanisms, information dissemination and referring questionable cases of vaccine-preventable diseases. In rural areas vaccination is carried out by behvarzes (health workers) in the Health Houses and mobile teams deliver these services to rural settlements without Health Houses. In urban areas vaccination takes place in maternity wards. The reasons for the success of EPI in Iran are domestic manufacturing of all vaccines, even virus vaccines (TOPV and measles), a regular programme of vaccination, and prescribing booster shots for measles and DTP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) as part of the routine vaccination and substitution of DT vaccine for TT due to the increase of cases of diphtheria during latter years of war. Meanwhile, a

special body supervises vaccine manufacturing inside the country and imports. This is an important element in maintaining a high level of vaccination coverage.

105. To eradicate poliomyelitis in Iran by the year 2000, since 1993 "national immunization day against polio" has been organized for six successive years. The goals of this programme are:

(a) To raise the immunization level of children under five years to 98 per cent;

(b) To raise public awareness regarding the need for vaccination of children under five years of age;

(c) To involve different segments of the community in providing 90 per cent of human resources and 50 per cent of the budget for this programme;

(d) To manufacture 100 per cent of demand for vaccines inside the country.

106. The polio eradication programme is presently in the final stages and the key to its success is the participation of community, Government and private sectors in the preliminary and operational phases. According to reports, confirmed by WHO, no case of wild virus polio has been reported in the past 18 months.

107. Maintenance and enhancement of the health of mothers and infants as two vulnerable groups constitute an important part of health services. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution and commencement of health network systems, delivering health services to mothers and children has assumed special priority. Such services are presently available nationwide. A comparison of maternal, infant and child death rates before the Islamic Revolution and in 1995 shows that the reduction of the death rate of children one month to one year of age has been greater than the reduction of infant and maternal mortality.

108. The key elements for the success of the programme for the reduction of the maternal and infant mortality rates are upgrading knowledge of all levels of health services personnel, increasing the knowledge and broadening the scope of activities of rural midwives and health workers, general practitioners, midwifery experts, paediatricians and gynaecologists, and equipping Health Houses and Health Centres. These activities can reduce disorders and complications during child-bearing and after delivery, as well as complications during the early days of life and can provide necessary health care to vulnerable mothers and infants. This programme is presently at an initial stage. According to the latest studies, the maternal mortality rate from pregnancy disorders is [...] deaths per 100,000 births and the infant mortality has fallen from 20 per 1,000 live births to less than 15. Presently, this programme is being implemented in two provinces of Khorasan and East Azerbaijan on an experimental basis and efforts are under way to identify causes of maternal and infant mortality in other provinces. Alongside this a national research project, "Survey on Patterns of Infant

Mortality in the Islamic Republic of Iran", will be implemented in the near future along with a research project on "Causes of Stillbirths and Infant Mortality" in the aforementioned two provinces.

109. With the advances in technology and new information on the advantages of breastfeeding, extensive efforts have been made in recent decades to support and encourage breastfeeding. The primary goal of these efforts is to reverse the growing trend towards bottle-feeding. In order to free Iranian mothers and children from the clutches of companies producing milk formula and to raise the level of health and survival of children, the Government decided in 1985 that the distribution of baby formula should be done by three State enterprises with identical labels, and advertisements for milk formula were banned. A scientific committee comprising professors of medical universities, managers and senior experts of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education assumed the responsibility to teach this programme at university level and then it will be transferred to field level. The project for sharing of rooms by mother and infant was implemented with the collaboration of National and Provincial Committees on Breast-feeding. In this connection, members of the National Committee on Breast-feeding and experts of the National Centre for the Promotion of Breast-feeding visited "baby-friendly" hospitals. Presently, close to 300 (80 per cent) of public and private hospitals have received a "baby-friendly" hospital award.

110. As a result of the activities of this programme the proportion of exclusively breastfed infants has risen from 8 per cent in the beginning of the programme to 45 per cent in 1994. The import and consumption of milk formula have also been reduced from 56 million cans in 1985 to 12 million cans in 1994. Furthermore, the proportion of infants breastfed until the age of one is 79 per cent in urban areas and 85.4 per cent is rural areas. In line with this programme, the Act on Promotion of Breast-feeding and Protection of Nursing Mothers was approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly. This Act increased maternity leave from three to four months, and provided hourly daily leave for feeding the infant.

111. Facts and statistics from numerous research projects demonstrate that exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months after birth can prevent 98 to 99.5 per cent of unwanted pregnancies. Thus, 2.5 million lactating mothers can use this reliable method of contraception in the first six months after birth.

112. The continuation of this programme depends on the education of the public. There are plans to overcome problems associated with breastfeeding and to increase the number of infants using mother's milk.

113. Regarding control of diarrhoeal diseases, it is to be noted that according to studies carried out in 1984 and 1985 on 10 per cent of the population, diarrhoeal dehydration accounted for 22 per cent of deaths of children under the age of five; this figure has been brought down to 5.4 per cent. The Ministry of Health and Medical Education has implemented a diarrhoeal disease programme since 1984 and in this connection a committee comprising members of faculty of medical science universities and senior

experts and executive officials has been formed to formulate the programme. The goals of this plan were to reduce deaths resulting from child diarrhoeal dehydration and reduction in the incidence of diarrhoeal diseases in children under the age of five. The activities of this programme are:

(a) To educate general practitioners and paediatricians, experts and family health workers;

(b) To launch an ORT corner in the majority of urban and rural health centre;

(c) Standardization and harmonization of all oral rehydration salts on the basis of the WHO formula.

114. Acute respiratory infections (ARI), along with diarrhoeal diseases are the leading causes of deaths among children under the age of five. The programme for the control of chronic respiratory infections for under-five children began in 1973 and gradually extended nationwide. For the implementation of these programmes, health personnel, general practitioners and paediatrician members of university faculties receive training.

115. To reduce deaths of children under five as a result of ARI and for preventive purposes, efforts have been made to make appropriate diagnostic and treatment services accessible to all. Education of families, better vaccination coverage and elimination of contributing factors such as vitamin A deficiency and malnutrition have also been instrumental in realizing the goals of this programme. Among the points of strength of this programme are the existence of a national health network, the provision of required equipment and medicine, continuos supervision, a reliable and comprehensive scientific basis and the participation of educational hospitals in research programmes. Nevertheless, there are difficulties in explaining and justifying the programme for university teachers and in educating the public. Among the achievements of this programme has been reduction of deaths of children under five years of age due to acute respiratory infection from 17 per cent to 7.1 per cent. Furthermore, in 99.5 per cent of health and treatment centres the relevant personnel have received necessary training and these centres have 99.5 per cent capacity to handle ARI cases. The mortality rate from pneumonia has declined to 0.5 per 1,000 (1994) and pertussis vaccination coverage is 98 per cent.

116. Regarding the campaign against iodine deficiency disorders, (IDD), the Islamic Republic of Iran is not an iodine-deficient country. In the first published survey in the latter part of the 1960s the prevalence of iodine deficiency cases in mountainous regions of Alborz and Zagros was reported to be high, but nothing was done in that connection. In the latter part of the 1980s comprehensive research was carried out on IDD in four provinces which showed a high level of IDD. Considering the high incidence of IDD and its impact on the growth of the child, a campaign against iodine deficiency as a national health movement and by iodizing salt and prescribing iodine oil to people began in earnest. Iodized salt was distributed in hyperendemic regions through the primary health care network and in other parts of the country

through the private sector. The Ministry of Health and Medical Education supplies potassium iodine to salt-producing factories. At present 87 per cent of the urban population and 76 per cent of rural people consume iodized salt and this figure will hopefully reach 100 per cent.

117. Regarding mouth and teeth hygiene, it is to be noted that the plan for integrating mouth and teeth health into the PHC network has been approved and will be implemented in seven provinces. The three vulnerable groups, children under 6 years of age, the 6-12 age group and women of child-bearing age, are covered by services offered nationwide in a number of health centres that have dentistry units, dentists or mouth and dental health workers, and other related equipment.

118. With expansion of urbanization and the creation of satellite towns near large cities, the delivery of health and treatment services to vulnerable groups, especially children, though urban health and treatment centres has faced major problems. Since 1991 the Ministry of Health and Medical Education has endeavoured to involve the community with a view to imparting momentum to delivery of services. In this respect the Ministry launched a project to facilitate better interaction with the community with specific aims such as educating families about the health of mothers and children, identifying non-vaccinated children, enhancement of the nutrition of children and improvement of the general heath situation. More than 19,000 health coordinators are active nationwide. They play an important role in raising child health services coverage in areas surrounding large cities.

119. The Ministry of Education began implementing the School Health Workers Project in 1992. In this project, interested students from each class are selected with the help of health trainers. After receiving direct training, the selected students serve as health workers on school premises and supervise and train other students. At present all schools throughout the country have school health workers. The goal of this project is to improve and maintain a level of health at schools by involving the active participation of students. The objectives of this project are:

(a) To make good use of the skills and experiences of health trainers with a view to maintaining and improving the education level of students;

(b) To improve and upgrade the knowledge and outlook of students towards issues relating to their hygiene and health;

(c) To use students as health workers at school, at home and in society with a view to having a positive impact on the general health of society;

(d) To promote a spirit of cooperation, solidarity and positive competition among students in relation to health activities of school;

(e) To impart enthusiasm and greater momentum among health trainers with a view to realizing long-term health objectives in schools;

(f) To enable students acquire health skills and capabilities.

120. Progress in improving nutrition has not been in parallel with the substantial reduction in child mortality. According to the latest survey, the number of children suffering from malnutrition is 15 per cent among boys and 16.3 per cent among girls. The resulting information shows that growth trend of children begins to slow after commencement of supplementary feeding. A multifaceted programme has been designed to counter this nutrition problem.

121. Population growth in Iran has varied greatly. The population growth rate for 1986-1996 was 3.2 per cent. This rapid growth rate has been reversed due to the fact that increase in population is an impediment in the way to social progress and sustainable development. The commitment of Government and measures taken against this phenomenon have contributed greatly to reduction of the population growth rate, bringing it down to 1.5 per cent in urban areas and 2 per cent in rural areas in 1995. These efforts are mainly concentrated in following activities:

(a) A comprehensive family planning programme by offering gratis a broad range of contraceptives to all through PHC networks;

(b) Focusing on wide dissemination of information and public education;

(c) Special programmes tailored for special groups;

(d) Extensive education of health personnel; and

(e) Promoting special legislation supportive of family planning programmes.

122. According to the latest survey in 1995, the level of contraceptive use is about 53 per cent which shows an increase of 20 per cent compared to 1989. The success in family planning has caused reduction of overall fertility from 5.6. per cent in 1985 to 3.3 per cent in 1995. Along with this achievement, sustainability of overall achievements in health and education have also been important contributive factors for the reduction of the population growth rate in Iran.

123. Moreover, a population education project has been implemented in five provinces since 1981 by the Ministry of Education with the cooperation of UNFPA. In those provinces, a specific number of schools has been selected and the project is implemented on experimental basis. Since 1991 concepts relating to population education have been included in the selected schools. Furthermore, training courses have been organized for provincial coordinators, instructors at teacher training schools and teachers of this course. The purpose of this project is to raise knowledge and information of students concerning the economic, social cultural and environmental impact of population growth.

D. Social security and child care services and facilities (art. 26 and art. 18, para. 3)

124. In accordance with the Social Security Act, the Social Security Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran provides insurance coverage for both women and men on the basis of their employment. The insured and members of their family (spouse, children, and mother and father who are dependent on the insured) benefit from insurance schemes. In the social security system of Iran the family, as a social unit, benefits from social security insurance in two ways: as a principal beneficiary and as an affiliated beneficiary.

125. Women and men employees who are engaged in activities covered by social security, benefit from long-term and short-term insurance schemes. Long-term benefits include retirement, pension and disability payments as well as payments to dependents after death of the head of household. In the short term, members of the family of the insured benefit from medical insurance, unemployment benefits, compensation, etc.

126. In the Islamic Republic of Iran about 40 per cent of the capacity of child day care centres and about 30 per cent of provincial child care services are allocated to children of working mothers, and children without guardians or unknown parents are kept in 24-hour institutions; if their parents are not identified they will be placed with applicants for adoption.

127. The Department of Insurance and Medical Services for the Needy insures needy people in line with its mandate under the provisions of the Universal Insurance Act. In this respect, in 1995, more than 3.2 million people (1.4 million children and adolescents) from the needy segments of the population were covered by medical insurance schemes of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee. The following groups are covered by the Committee: Welfare Recipients of the Committee, Martyr Rajaie Plan and Welfare Organization, families of prisoners, and haemophiliac and kidney patients and other needy people. The Committee also assists newlyweds in acquiring basic requirements to start their married life. In this respect, more than 973,000 newlyweds have sought assistance from the Committee which has paid 52.8 billion rials for this purpose. According to a decree by the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Committee is to expand these activities in coming years. It should also be noted that the number of girls eligible for marriage who are covered by the Committee is 252,000.

E. Standard of living (art. 27, paras. 1-3)

128. The Islamic Republic of Iran guarantees the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Article 1188 of the Civil Code specifies that either the father or the paternal grandfather may appoint an executor to take care of and attend to the education of the child after his death and administer the child's financial affairs. Furthermore, in accordance with note 35 to the Budget Act (1996), a 50 per cent increase in child assistance allowance has been envisaged.

VI. EDUCATION, LEISURE, RECREATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

A. Education, including primary, secondary and vocational education (art. 28)

129. According to article 31 of the Constitution, the Government shall provide means of free education for all the people. Regarding compulsory and free education of children in the 6-10 age group, rules of procedure were prepared under the title "Rules of Procedure to Note 62 of Budget Act for Second Five-year Development Plan" and were approved by the Council of Ministers. According to the provisions of the rules of procedure all children within that age group should be identified and covered during the Second Development Plan (1995-1999). It is anticipated that by the end of the Plan all children in the 6-10 age group will receive primary education.

130. The education system of the Islamic Republic of Iran is divided as follow: primary school (five years), orientation or guidance school (three years) and secondary school (four years). In 1992 the new system of secondary education, consisting of three years replaced the previous system. After the completion of three years of secondary education, students go through one year of pre-university courses. The primary school takes five years to finish and children six years of age enter this phase. In accordance with specific rules and criteria they can remain in the primary level up to age 15 at the most. Schools are open six days a week and primary education in Iran is compulsory and free.

131. Since the majority of the people of Iran in various regions of the country speak Farsi, the formal language in all schools is Farsi. In bilingual areas of the country a one-month preparatory class is held free of charge in order to enable children with local dialects to overcome the language problem.

132. Free primary education is accessible equally to boys and girls. However, the proportion of girl students is 47.1 per cent. During the three-year plan in school years 1997/98 and 1999/2000 about 98 per cent of eligible children of the 8-10 age group will receive primary education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education provides free meals to students in deprived regions and in some cases it provides educational aids and stationery free of charge.

133. The total school population at primary level during 1995/96 was 9,445,347 of whom 4,448,655 were girls and 4,996,692 boys. Of this total 3,984,633 or 42.2 per cent were in rural areas, and 8.8 per cent failed to complete this phase of education (10.3 per cent of boys and 7.2 per cent of girls). The proportion of graduates in the fifth level of primary education in 1995/96 was 87.5 per cent (85.3 per cent boys and 90 per cent girls).

134. There are 60,656 public and 1,990 private non-profit schools at primary level. In this respect, much effort has been made to build schools near the residence of students. In remote rural areas, day and night schools have been built in adjacent larger and more central rural settlements. In areas where it is not possible for the Ministry of Education to be present, teachers from the Literacy Movement are recruited for primary education classes.

135. The orientation or guidance level is for three years and covers children in the age group 11-13. The students who have successfully completed formal primary level or the fifth grade of adult education (Literacy Movement) are eligible to enter the orientation level. The education programme for this level is 6 days a week, 30 hours for the first orientation grade, 32 hours for the second and 33 hours for the third. At present, the programme of the orientation level is 200 working days and includes 1,200 hours of instruction for the three grades.

136. To cover all students 11 to 13 years of age 24-hour schools have been established for rural and nomadic people. Of the 486 day and night schools, 350 boys schools and 136 girls schools have been established in rural areas, and of the 49 in the nomadic communities, 37 are for boys and 12 for girls. The total student population in day and night schools in rural and nomadic communities is 80,804. It is to be noted that 24 hour orientation schools have facilities such as three meals a day, accommodation and laboratories and workshops. Furthermore, at the orientation level, more than 1,300 rural schools are established to enrol students in the scattered rural settlements. The students in the surrounding rural settlements are transported by mini-buses (free of charge) daily to central rural locations.

137. At the secondary education level 127 exemplary public schools have been established to recruit students in the deprived areas. These schools have adequate educational facilities and 36 are for girls and 91 for boys. Of the total of 127 exemplary schools in rural and nomadic communities 24 are day and 103 are day and night schools. Secondary education is presently offered in two separate systems: one is the old system, which will be totally dismantled by 1998, and the other is the new system which lasts three years. Students take their courses on a unit and term basis (university system). In this system there is a one-year pre-university curriculum. The objectives, structure and syllabus of the new secondary system are explained in following paragraphs.

138. The overall goals of the theoretical branch of secondary education are enhancement of the general knowledge of students, better identification of talented and interested students, and providing conducive conditions to guide students towards a desirable educational direction and preparing them to continue their education at higher levels. The students who want to choose this branch should complete 96 units and obtain a secondary diploma in one of the three disciplines of literature and liberal arts, mathematics and physics, and applied sciences. About 68 to 70 units are common to all three branches and the rest are exclusive and optional units. Holders of a secondary diploma are eligible to continue their education at the pre-university level, provided they meet the required criteria, or take vocational training courses geared to enable them to enter the job market. They can also continue their education towards a university degree, provided they meet the necessary criteria, and if

needed, take additional compensatory units. Holders of theoretical secondary diplomas and also those that have dropped out or for some reason were not able to continue their education can enter the vocational branch, and by acquiring skills of their interest find suitable employment. These students can receive a military deferment if they are in school.

139. The overall goals of the technical and vocational branch are to enhance the general knowledge of students, providing better identification of talented and interested students, creating conducive conditions to guide them towards useful employment and preparing them to continue their education in different fields of applied science. The students who choose this branch can continue their education in one of the fields relating to industry, agriculture, electrical engineering, marine industries, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, arts, hygiene, management and business and financial administration. The curriculum in the technical and vocational branch is for five years and leads to a baccalaureate degree. These programmes are designed in such a way that students at the end of three years and passing 96 units in the discipline of their choice will most likely acquire employable skills. Of the 96 units 60 are common to all fields and 36 units are in exclusive courses and skills relative to the selected discipline. Upon completion of 170 units, students receive a Bachelor's degree.

140. The groups of secondary technical and vocational education include: industrial disciplines covering wood and automotive industries, manufacturing, design and drawing, electronics and marine communications, mechanics of marine engines, navigation, electronic and electrotechnical fields, construction, chemical industry, textile industry, ceramics, mineralogy, metallurgy, agricultural fields covering farming, horticulture and animal husbandry, and services covering graphics, surveying, designing, accounting and computer. Statistics relating to students in this branch for the school year 1995/96 (classified by gender in each of the three main fields, industry, agriculture and services) and number of employees (both formal and contractual) are listed in the tables below:

Table 5. Number of secondary students, by discipline and gender

Discipline	Girls	Boys
Technical	641	71 966
Vocational	30 892	67 598
Agriculture	-	2 391
Total	31 533	141 955

Table 6. Number of adult secondary students, by discipline and gender

Discipline	Men	Women	Total
Technical	17 549	246	17 795
Vocational	3 674	4 406	8 080
Agriculture	1 744	3	1 745
Total	22 965	4 655	27 670

141. About 4,500 persons covered by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee are trained in workshops and schools affiliated to this Committee in various fields such as weaving, tailoring, typing and kilim-weaving. About 2,500 are also sent to vocational schools. They enter the job market after receiving necessary training or begin a small enterprise with the assistance of the Committee. About 71,000 women and young girls have already received such training.

142. The general objective of vocational secondary education is to train human resources at the semi-skilled and skilled level and supervisors for the industrial, agricultural and services sectors. The students need to pass at least 49 general units, obtain a first degree certificate of skill and complete up to 96 units before they are eligible to acquire a vocational diploma. In the 1995/96 school year the number of male and female vocational students was 80,620 (51,000 boys and 29,620 girls).

142. Compensatory and adult education is for those who have not been able, for one reason or the other, to complete the secondary level of general education in the discipline and concentration of their choice, or those who want to change their concentration and take special courses simultaneously.

143. The overall objective of pre-university level is to prepare students for entry into higher levels of learning. This level includes a number of pre-university groups of courses that are commensurate with groupings of courses in the university entry examination. The number of units is 32, which are offered on a semester basis. Those successfully completing this level will receive a certificate of pre-university level. The holders of this certificate are eligible to take university entrance examinations, or if interested can take entrance examinations in the technical and vocational branch for undergraduate university programmes, or enter the job market by taking some skill-training courses.

144. The overall goal of the undergraduate programme which is a part of the applied science education system is to train medium-rank human resources (technicians, supervisors and trainers) for the economic, social and cultural sectors. Holders of technical and vocational diplomas can continue their education in concentrations suitable to their educational background without

needing to pass pre-university courses. Holders of other diplomas as well as holders of pre-university certificates can take these courses if they pass special pre-university courses of the secondary vocational and technical branch after taking an entrance examination.

145. The number of adult students (night schools) at secondary level in 1995/96 is about 220,000 and the number of day school students is about 3.2 million. Close to 60 per cent of the fourth grade secondary students graduate (68 per cent of girls and 52 per cent of boys). Furthermore, according to a survey, about 71 per cent of students in the third year of the new system have passed all their required units. The proportion of girl and boy students at the secondary level is 46 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively. To achieve equal educational opportunities, in keeping with the policy of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and with a view to giving effect to the right enshrined in article 13 of the Constitution, the following measures have been taken: establishment of bearding schools; establishment of a central dormitory; strengthening the educational base of the deprived areas; creation of facilities for teachers in the deprived areas.

146. To promote private sector and community participation in the field of education, the Government has authorized the establishment of non-profit schools. The table below shows the number of non-profit schools and their student population in the 1995/96 school year:

Table 7. Non-profit schools by educational level and number of students, by gender

Level	Number of schools	Girls	Boys and girls
Primary	1909	70 627	204 439
Guidance	1801	54 659	189 851
Secondary-General	1044	16 413	45 753

147. The number of students in the country has increased from 13.8 million in 1989 to 17.8 million in 1994 and to 19.5 million in 1996 representing an annual growth rate of 5.1 per cent. In other words 718,000 students have been added to the total student population each year. The following table shows the number of students in 1995/96 classified according to educational level and gender:

Table 8. Total student population (1995/96), by type of school and gender

Type of education			Number of schools	Girls	Boys and girls
Exceptional children			787	22 959	58 512
Pre-school			2 201	71 299	147 064
Primary	Public		60 656	4 378 028	9 240 908
	Private (non-profit)		1 909	70 627	204 439
	Total		62 565	4 448 655	9 445 347
Guidance	Public		224 487	2 170 556	4 765 354
	Private (non-profit)		1 801	54 659	189 851
	Total		24 288	2 225 215	4 955 205
Secondary (General)	Public		8 593	662 535	1 362 587
	Private (non-profit)		1 044	16 413	45 753
	Total		9 637	678 946	1 408 340
Vocational	Technical		562	30 892	67 598
	Agriculture		72	-	2 391
	Total		1 147	31 533	141 955
Teacher training			121	13 191	25 939
Rural Teacher training			77	2 511	6 856
Adult Education	Primary Fifth Grade Boarding School		59	766	1 631
	General		548	38 390	94 267
	Secondary	General	612	36 064	100 147
		Technical	16	-	54 500
		Vocational	17	507	1 587
		Total	645	36 571	103 379
New System-Secondary	Day		-	7 667 770	1 629 182
	Night		-	50 074	125 190
	Pre-university		-	29 188	50 694
	Total		102 125	8 416 068	18 192 461

148. The National Organization for Exceptional Talents has been established to identify brilliant and exceptional talents nationwide. Some of the functions of this Organization are:

(a) To prepare the ground for identification and cultivation of talented students nationwide;

(b) To conduct research on talented students;

(c) To provide education and financial assistance to students of low-income families;

(d) To publish educational materials for the purpose of upgrading the educational level of teachers, staff and students of the Organization.

149. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has established a number of non-profit schools for the talented children of workers under the management of a charitable institution "AMAL". The disadvantaged provinces of the country are accorded higher priority. All services in this school are free. The number of non-profit and science schools are two science schools for talented students with a capacity of 1,050 students, and seven non-profit schools nationwide.

B. Aims of education (art. 29)

150. Guiding the cultural talents and innovations of the young generation and the intellectual development of children and adolescents are accorded special priority in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Special attention has been paid to this matter in the Second Five-Year Development Plan, and promotion of book-reading among young people and according priority to children and adolescents in cultural and art programmes are of special importance. The aims of education in the Islamic Republic of Iran are:

(a) To strengthen the faith and moral values of students through teaching of Islamic tenets and principles;

(b) Creation of necessary conditions for preservation of cultural, economic and political independence through familiarizing students with science, technology and vocations required by society;

(c) Development of the talents of students to the fullest potential and strengthening the spirit of research, innovation and creativity in all scientific, technical and cultural fields;

(d) Development of respect for law and enjoyment by all people of their legitimate rights;

(e) Strengthening a spirit of accountability, self-confidence and discipline.

151. For the development of the child's personality and talents, children's books should have the following characteristics:

(a) Immorality, laziness, dishonesty, intimidation of others, malice and vice should not be promoted;

(b) No distinction should be made among human beings because of nationality and language that could sow seeds of discord among children;

(c) Beliefs and values shared by the great divine religions should be promoted;

(d) Each person should accept his/her obligations under the international copyright conventions;

(e) the quality of images should not weaken the value of the content.

152. The plan of election of "School Mayor" that was recently implemented in 300 girls and boys guidance schools of Tehran will soon be extended to schools nationwide. The aim of this plan is to promote children's involvement in community activities. This plan was carried out by the Municipality of Tehran with the collaboration of a group of university instructors and has also been supported by international organizations including UNESCO.

1. Children-to-children education plan

153. This plan was implemented by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and UNICEF, in four provinces (in 36 urban and rural schools equally) during the 1995/96 school year. The purpose of the plan is to promote greater involvement by children in health education. By this method without using one-sided education, the children find solutions to problems through group research activities. The innovative character of this plan motivates students and others in society to greater participation. The overall objective of this plan is to arrive at appropriate methods of using the full potential of students with a view to encouraging their active participation in enhancement of their health and that of the society. Other more specific objectives of this plan are:

(a) To raise health awareness among students;

(b) To attract the active participation of students in health matters at school, home and in society;

(c) To develop the child's mental and physical abilities;

(d) To improve communications skill and self-esteem among children;

(e) To develop health skills and to promote health culture and healthy behaviour;

(f) To raise health awareness among teachers; and

(g) To impart health education to children by employing active learning methods.

154. The strategies of the plan are directed to:

(a) Participation of health and education officials with a view to supporting implementation of the plan;

(b) Using primary schools as the basic ground for implementation of the plan;

(c) Familiarizing teachers and others involved in the plan with methods of teaching health to children;

(d) Using local media and other existing facilities to introduce the plan to the community;

(e) Emphasizing the role of students as principal participants in learning and activities;

(f) Using teachers to direct students towards realization of the objectives of the plan;

(g) Using technical and health resources as well as experts to raise awareness of students and teachers;

(h) Using resources of other sectors for the implementation of the plan;

(i) Monitoring and evaluation of the plan at different levels.

2. Cultural and educational measures for needy students

155. Establishment of student boarding houses in deprived areas is among the valuable measures that has contributed greatly to the continuation of education by students. In this respect, 4,560 students in 1995 resided at 89 boarding houses affiliated to the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee and 8,294 students used boarding and dormitory facilities of the Ministry of Education and other organs. In view of the fact that many of the needy under the protection of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, including the adolescents and children, are suffering from malnutrition, this charitable organization has for some years distributed meat, rice, grains, tuna fish, protein materials and other things. Every year more than 83,000 tons of flour, 6,000 tons of rice and grains, 2,500 tons of sugar and tea, and thousands of tons of other foodstuffs are distributed among welfare recipients.

156. The Imam Khomeini Relief Committee has held a special festivity every year since 1995 to collect the contributions of people and revolutionary organizations to help needy students. Contributions are given to the Ministry of Education for distribution. The Committee has collected about 4 billion rials in cash, stationery, school gear, shoes, clothing and other goods. This programme was also implemented in 1996, collecting about 8.9 billion rials in cash and aid in kind. The Committee organizes a "charity festival" in February each year (since 1990) at which it collects contributions from people and distributes them among the poorer segments of the population. The total value of collected contributions in the form of cash, gold and jewellery, clothing, foodstuffs and many other goods amounted to 12 billion rials. Since 1990 the total value of these contributions has amounted to 33.4 billion rials.

C. Leisure, recreation and cultural activities (art. 31)

157. The Ministry of Education, through the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents and the Parents and Teachers Association, organizes diverse cultural, artistic and recreational activities for children. In addition, many government agencies every year organize special recreational programmes for the children of their employees on the occasion of International Children's Day. They also organize recreational programmes for the free time of young people during summer holidays such as summer camps, visits to cultural centres, and use of sports facilities. Private institutions also organize many recreational activities for children. The table below shows some of the important activities of the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents:

Table 9. Recreation and cultural activities organized by the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents

Subject	Year / Title and number	Annual average 1966-1978	Annual average 1991-1997	1992	1993	1994	1995
Books	Titles	22	79	167	143	109	157
	Circulation	188 000	963 000	2 170 000	3 760 000	3 245 000	3 500 000
Theatre	Titles	3.6	205	3	6	9	9
	Performances	-	-	385	650	804	800
Films	Titles	12	7.5	6	7	8	8
	Minutes	120 minutes annually	180 minutes annually	150	140	155	220
Recreational publications	Titles	-	From 1982 12 titles	13	13	26	14
	Circulation	-	120 000	147 000	130 000	270 000	150 000
Cassettes	Titles	-	-	-	-	-	4
	Minutes	-	-	-	-	-	240

158. It should be also added that since 1995 two magazines, Pooyesh (children's arts and literature) and Golbang, have been published for teachers and work on a dictionary for youth with about 10,000 terms has been completed. Moreover, two special groups have been formed to work on books relating to the Islamic Revolution and religious teachings. These two groups are to

produce 200 titles each during a five-year period. Also, the first student microscope was built by the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents in 1995. A telescope and sky-watcher were built previously. A video production group was also established in 1995. Finally, at the Fajr Film Festival (1995) two films by the Centre were presented.

159. In the library of the Centre 27 kinds of artistic and cultural activities are presented along with 3 million books. In 320 urban libraries more than 600,000 people are permanent members. In 1994 about 5.7 million and in 1995 about 6.5 million children and young persons participated in programmes of the Centre. In 1995, teaching of creative theatre was added to the arts education programme. In addition, 1,194 rural settlements are covered by library-by-mail which lends books to 40,000 rural members. Each member borrows 12 books each year. The table below shows the increase in the number of rural and urban libraries as well as art teachers.

Table 10. Number of libraries and art teachers

Year / Subject	Annual average 1966-1978	Annual average 1991-1997	1992	1993	1994	1995
Urban libraries-increase	11	8	10	15	20	20
Library-by-mail and rural libraries	Increase 2	Increase 120	-	20	1	15
Increase in number of art teachers	50 each year	64 each year	60	80	100	120

1. Iran Language Centre

160. More than 70 per cent of students in the language classes of the Iran Language Centre are adolescents and young people. In fact, families enrol their children in this language centre because it is a government institution affiliated to the Centre for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents. Every year four terms are offered and each term takes 50,000 students for English, French, German and Arabic classes. The Iran Language Centre has branches in Tehran, Shiraz, Mashhed, Isfahan, Kerman, Zanjan, Karaj, Urumieh, Yazd and Bobal. Establishment of other branches in Tabriz, Sari, Rasht, and Qazvin is also under way. Language instruction and teachers of the Centre are of a high standard. One of the important programmes of the Centre, begun in 1995, is the preparation of new textbooks and the designing of new educational systems compatible with advances in language instruction and cultural values in the society. This system will be put in place in 1997.

2. Public and international activities

161. The ceremony marking International Children's Day (1 June) was held in 1994 in the presence of the President at the Centre for Cultural and Artistic Creations and in 1995 the winners of an international arts

competition received their prizes from the President. The Centre for Cultural and Artistic Creations has also participated in a number of festivals and national and international exhibitions. Members of the Centre won in 1994 and 1995 in international competitions 6 gold, 22 silver and 25 bronze medals, and more than 80 diplomas of honour. During this period, a number of the Centre's short and feature films as well as books won national and international prizes.

162. The Centre has organized many national exhibitions. Moreover, the fourth children's book festival was held in February 1995 to introduce the best young writers, painters and authors. The Centre's Reference Library, which is exclusively for children's arts and literature, subscribes to 63 foreign publications and has more than 16,636 titles of foreign books. This library is used by writers, painters and other interested people. Books that have won international prizes, different encyclopaedias and new titles are the assets of this library.

163. The Centre for Literary Creations has the responsibility of nurturing literary talents. In 1994 the Centre received 6,654 literary letters and communicated replies to 5,811. The new members of this Centre are 944 girls and 334 boys. The Centre communicates with its members by correspondence and personal presence. Also, the Centre offers training courses for its staff. In 1994, during 176 teaching days 1,192 hours of instruction were offered. One of the important education programmes of the Centre was designing of remote education (under-graduate level) for teachers.

164. A large number of cultural houses such as Bahman, Khovaran, Niavaran, Avecinna, Sadr, Eshrq, Arasbaran, Andisheh and Amir Kabir as well as the Welfare Organization, the High Council of Youth and mosques organize painting, music, computer, reading classes and leisure programmes to fill the free time of young people. In addition, the Ministry of Cultural and Islamic Guidance arranges special programmes for children and young people. This Ministry has organized numerous activities exclusively for children, including many theatrical festivals, with a view to facilitating exchange of thoughts and ideas and using national and international experiences in children's theatre. Some of the children's theatrical performances won a number of awards.

165. Once every two years an international puppet show exhibition is held in Iran with the aim of promoting puppet performances, identifying new talent, demonstrating the artistic talents of young people and providing an opportunity for an exchange of experiences and consolidating friendship among puppet theatre performers.

166. Cultural services to students covered by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee help fill their free time and continuation of their education. The Committee offers textbooks, education aids, stationery and supplementary books. The Correspondence Education Plan has been designed to enhance the level of knowledge of students and to encourage them to read and display their latent talents. In 1995 more than 26,459 children and adolescents from remote areas were covered by this plan.

167. Educational camps for girl students are organized each year with the aim of encouraging talented students and providing recreational programmes.

In this respect, 60,000 students under the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee participated at nationwide and regional camps. During the past 11 years 29,515 students benefited from these camp facilities. The Committee also organizes on a regular basis different competitions and courses for the purpose of enhancing the scientific and cultural level of the youth of the nation.

VII. SPECIAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES

A. Children in emergency situations

1. Refugee children (art. 22)

168. Generally, children of persons who have been accepted in Iran as refugees or displaced persons are also considered refugees and enjoy all advantages, benefits and protection that are accorded to their parents because of their refugee status. Displaced and refugee children in the Islamic Republic of Iran are divided into two main groups. Afghan refugee children have the same access to free public education as Iranian students. Those students that have some schooling but no valid educational certificate are given an evaluation examination in the Farsi language to determine their level. In the 1995/96 school year, about 106,772 Afghani students went to schools in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iraqi refugee students also have equal access to free public education. Those Iraqi students with previous schooling but no educational certificates are examined in the Arabic language. The table below shows the situation of Afghani and Iraqi refugee students in the 1995/96 school year.

Table 11. Refugee students, by educational level and gender

Nationality	Primary		Guidance		Secondary		Total
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	
Afghani	36 590	43 331	8 799	12 402	2 389	3 281	106 772
Iraqi	7 860	10 300	2 314	2 937	1 272	1 094	72 577

169. In general, refugee children need special health care that has to be delivered to them until a certain age. In this respect, all refugee children are covered by these health care and protection services and these Iranian children receive free vaccinations and other health care services. The Department of Nutrition and Health in Schools provides the following services for refugee children: establishment of health centres at schools; placement of health trainers at schools and conducting different medical examinations such as eyesight and auditory measurements, teeth and mouth check-ups, and other primary health care services. During the 1991/92 school year the number of health trainers was 3,227, which increased to 3,494 in 1994/95. Each health trainer should cover 1,000 students. In the 1992/93 school year the number of students covered was 2,846,460, which increased to 3,105,659 in 1994/95. These figures relate to urban primary and guidance schools.

170. In view of marriages among foreign nationals, or in some cases marriages of refugees with Iranian women that have led to abandonment of children and spouses, efforts have been made to provide to the extent possible financial and material assistance to these persons, particularly to their children.

2. Children in armed conflicts (art. 38), including physical and psychological recovery and social integration (art. 39)

171. Since refugees usually leave their country in time of crisis, and taking into account that refugee children may have lost their parents or have been separated from them, refugee children are kept in special places with a view to preventing any psychological and even physical abuse. In this respect, the facilities and resources of relevant organizations such as the Welfare Organization are used. These protective services cover those refugee children who have been separated from their parents and seek to reunite with them. These protective measures include searching for their parents or relatives and receiving legal permission to enter and leave the country. Legal efforts to reunite refugee children who have been separated from their parents for whatever reason or whose parents live in third countries are made in collaboration with the UNHCR office in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

172. Regarding children taking part in armed conflicts (art. 38), it should be noted that according to article 2 of the Public Conscription Act, every Iranian citizen is eligible for military service as of 21 March of the year he reaches 19. According to article 23 of the rules of Procedures of the Conscription Act, at age 19 Iranian nationals are summoned to the Conscription Office to clarify their draft status. According to article 4 of the Rules of Procedures, those persons found eligible to serve are recruited for military service during the year they have reached the age of 19. The minimum employment age for the armed forces for the purpose of receiving military training is 16 and the minimum age of employment for the Police Forces is 17.

B. Children in conflict with the law

1. Administration juvenile justice

173. Article 49 of Islamic Penalties Act stipulates that if a child commits a crime he/she will not be held liable. However, the education and disciplining of the child will be given to the guardian. If necessary, the court will instruct the house of correction to carry out this task. In pursuance of note 2 to article 49 of the Islamic Penalties Act, whenever corporal punishment becomes necessary for the education and disciplining of juvenile delinquents, the range and kind of the corporal punishment must be moderate and equitable. Determination of this is upon the court. The basic legal guarantees in article 40 are included in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran as follow:

> "No person shall be arrested unless otherwise ordered by law. If a person is arrested, the accused shall be notified in writing of the reasons for accusation and within 24 hours the preliminary case shall be referred to a competent court which shall inquire into the case at its earliest convenience. The party violating provision of this article shall be punished according to law". (art. 32).

"Acquittal shall be the main and valid point and no person shall be considered guilty by law unless his guilt is provided by a competent court". (art. 37).

"Any torture whatsoever to make people confess or to obtain information shall be forbidden. To oblige a person to witness, to confess or swear an oath shall not be allowed nor shall such witness, confession and oath be valid. The party violating this article shall be punished according to law". (art. 38).

"No act nor relinquishment thereof shall be considered as an offence on the strength of the law enacted thereafter". (art. 169).

2. Deprivation of liberty

174. The Centre for Correction and Education is responsible for correction and disciplining of children and juveniles who have been found guilty of an offence by the court. The first correction house was established in 1969 in Tehran. According to the Rules of Procedure, the Centre has three parts, namely, temporary detention, correction and disciplining and prison. Each part is separate from the others and juveniles are separated according to age, past criminal record and, as far as possible, the type of offence. There is also a special section for female juveniles.

175. In each of these three parts the juveniles receive education and training in accordance with their talents, age and level of knowledge. The vocational education programme is carried out in such a way that, to the extent possible, ordinary general education is not undermined. The juveniles in the Centre for Correction and Education are obliged to take part 36 hours per week in classes or vocational workshops and to exercise one hour each day. At present the delinquents in the Centre are looked at from the psychological and social angle and since they are in the period of personality development and are impressionable, the bulk of activities is focused on educational psychological aspects and the aim of these measures is to enhance the mental and social development of juveniles by relying on Islamic teachings.

176. Current activities in the area of psychology by the Centre for Correction and Education are as follows:

(a) Interviews with children and juveniles upon entry into the Centre with a view to finding any psychological disorder. Pursuant to this interview those juveniles who need psychological treatment are identified (including those suffering from epilepsy, psychopaths, and neurotic juveniles);

(b) Conducting intelligence and personality tests after two weeks and when legal proceedings are completed;

(c) Individual and group psychotherapy;

(d) Preparation of a personality and psychological file for juveniles;

(e) Cooperation with the boarding, cultural and visiting room sections to enhance the psychological health of children;

(f) Establishment of relationships with families, particularly those juveniles with disturbed and broken families;

(g) Advising and guiding volunteer families;

(h) Lectures by psychologists and sociologists for families on visiting days;

(i) Acceptance of vulnerable volunteer families whose children are not yet in conflict with the law for consultation and guidance;

(j) Music therapy with the help of experts in this field.

177. Social activities of the Centre are assigned to assistance recipients with a view to contributing to social development and enhancement of their accountability and their awareness. In this respect the following activities have been carried out:

(a) Selection of the "Mayor of Kanoon" and assistants and members of the Kanoon City Council, by free election by assistance recipients and in the presence of these families;

(b) Assigning disciplinary matters to children under the direct supervision of the officials of the boarding house and chief supervisor;

(c) Formation of disciplinary councils by children and enforcing punitive and reward measures under the supervision of boarding and correctional supervisors.

178. In relation to social aid activities, the Centre (Kanoon) has taken the following measures:

(a) Interview and consultation with children and adolescents;

(b) Establishment of relationships with families of children;

(c) Communicating with the complainants to seek a compromise between the complainant and the accused;

(d) Follow up of the case of assistance recipients in judicial proceedings;

(e) Requesting amnesty and leave for assistance recipients with the permission of the Centre's Disciplinary Council.

179. Regarding juvenile courts, according to the directive of the Judicial Branch a special branch has been established with the follow-up of the Centre to investigate offences by children and juveniles on a full-time basis.

180. The Centre is also engaged in large-scale cultural activities. These activities are as follows:

(a) Library Section: reading short stories, publication of wall newspapers (weekly), publication of Payam magazine (once every 15 days), book-reading under the guidance of a teacher, instruction of library science, cooperation with "Children's Book Council";

(b) Vocational training and employment for machine tools, carpentry, metalwork workshops, in auto parts manufacturing, bakeries and employment in services sector (including culinary services, landscaping, laundry);

(c) Artistic affairs: painting is taught by teachers and experts focusing on artistic aspects and methods of expression by children. Cultural Houses organized by Bahman Cultural House holds poetry reading, astronomy and other courses once every week, as well as physical fitness, morning exercises and public athletic activities;

(d) Public relations: establishing relations with the Cultural Houses, government agencies, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Ministry of Educations, etc, publication of internal magazine Kanoon by children, and establishment of cooperative linkages with forums and organizations involved in children's rights and issues such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF;

(e) Campaign against illiteracy: holding literacy classes for illiterate children and adolescents;

(f) Supplementary classes: holding of supplementary classes for assistance recipients who were students prior to their arrest for the purpose of making up for lost schooling due to detention.

181. The correctional policy of the Centre is to assign responsibility and commitment for their place of living to released children and adolescents. In this respect, the Centre has discussed with the High Council of the Cultural Revolution and charitable organizations and is currently drawing up a master plan for this purpose. Moreover, the plan for making the formal education of the children and adolescents of Kanoon "exceptional" has been proposed to the High Council of the Cultural Revolution. The Council has agreed in principle with this plan and a master plan is being drawn up. The models already implemented in the Centre for Correction and Education have been presented nationwide with a view to having a single implementation policy for the establishment of regional correction centres.

182. Furthermore, the Bureau of Women's Affairs affiliated to the Judicial Branch has a Children's Rights Committee along with other committees. This committee specifically supervises enforcement of laws relating to children in the courts of the nation. Moreover, this committee has also made comparative surveys on the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and national laws, and has held consultative meetings with authorities, experts and relevant officials. In addition to non-governmental organizations, the Human Rights Commission is active in improving the legal status of children.

C. Exploited children, physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

183. In relation to the physical and psychological situation of children and their social reintegration, in Iran, due to the cultural traits of our Islamic society, children who have lost their fathers in the war imposed by Iraq against Iran have not faced severe emotional and psychological pressures resulting from Iraq's invasion of Iran. This is also due to the sympathy and care society attaches to survivors of the brave and pious men who fought in the war. The children in the border areas of the country were particularly susceptible to psychological and emotional pressures resulting from Iraq's military operations. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran transferred these children along with their parents to safer areas.

184. In relation to the commitments of States under article 39 of the Convention, the Martyrs Foundation of the Islamic Revolution has taken useful measures for children of martyrs of war. The Martyrs Foundation was established on 13 March 1980 by a decree from Imam Khomeini. In accordance with the directives of Imam Khomeini and the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Foundation has become one of the official agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran and serves the families of martyrs. The children of martyrs, as part of the persons covered by the Foundation, benefit from its services.

185. The quantitative objectives and policies of the foundation in relation to children of martyrs are as follows:

(a) Cultivation and development of talents and innovative potential of children of martyrs and preparing them for social responsibility;

(b) Protecting children of martyrs against negative social, cultural, and mental influences;

(c) Qualitative improvement of plans and educational, cultural and artistic programmes, and development of a conducive environment for enhancement of virtues and moral values;

(d) Creation of the necessary facilities for enhancement of the scientific, educational and skill potentials of the children of martyrs with a view to paving the way for their higher education and caring for them from kindergarten to university;

(e) Development of respect for the survivors of martyrs in social activities;

(f) Strengthening of the spirit of hard work and self-reliance among children of martyrs;

(g) Providing basic living needs of the martyrs' families (children of martyrs as members of these families also benefit);

(h) One-time assistance in cases of marriage, death and unexpected emergencies;

(i) Payment of salaries and pensions' providing housing, medical treatment, technical and vocational training for employment, and follow-up for the purpose of providing start-up capital or using the employment capacities of government agencies.

186. The Martyrs Foundation pays special attention to providing conducive conditions for the growth and development of martyrs' children both at home and outside (in school, university, extracurricular cultural activities and employment). Efforts are made to ensure that children are brought up in a warm family environment (with their mothers or grandparents). The Foundation also carries out protective measures and services for the spouses of martyrs who wish to remarry. These services are directed to enhance the psychological security of the spouses of martyrs and to improve the mental health of the children. To this end, the Martyrs Foundation uses incentives such as providing marriage consultations to help spouses of martyrs choose their spouses and pays part of the marriage expenses.

187. In exceptional cases when, due to the absence of the mother (spouse of martyr) and the paternal and maternal grandfathers, the martyrs' children are put in the custody of relatives or other competent persons, the Foundation provides material and moral assistance. In general, the services of the Martyrs Foundation are offered in five key areas: education, culture, economic assistance, legal and judicial assistance, and basic living requirements.

188. The Martyrs Foundation covers 142,477 children of martyrs and missing in action (73,762 boys and 68,715 girls). The largest proportion of children at the time of the martyrdom of their fathers belonged to the one year and below age group (20.6 per cent). This proportion has changed with the passage of time and in 1995 the largest proportion belonged to children 13 and 14 years of age (13.5 per cent). Statistical surveys show that 55 per cent of martyrs' children at the time of the martyrdom of their fathers were in the 6 years and below age group, 33 per cent were in the 7 to 18 age group, 12 per cent in the 19 and above age group. These ratios have changed in 1995 to 1.7 per cent, 62 per cent and 36.3 per cent, respectively.

1. Economic exploitation, including child labour (art. 32)

189. In Iran there are special provisions in the Labour Code for the protection of children. The minimum age for employment, according to article 79 of the Labour Code, is 15 full years. Sanctions are envisaged in the law for employers who hire children under 15 years of age (article 176 of the Labour Code).

190. All children between 15 and 18 years of age receive medical examinations by the Social Security Organization. These examinations are conducted at least once every year and medical records are kept in the employment file. At the time of the medical examinations, the physician should express his views on the compatibility of work with the capability of the worker (articles 80 and 81 of the Labour Code). For those employments by whose very nature and the conditions under which the work should be performed are harmful to the health and morals of children between 15 and 18 years of age, the law forbids the hiring of children (art. 84).

191. Daily working hours for young workers is half an hour less than the working hours of ordinary workers. Also assigning overtime work and light work (between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. the next day) and assigning harmful and dangerous work as well as carrying more than the permissible weight without the use of mechanical instruments are forbidden for workers between 15 and 18 years of age (arts. 82 and 83). In addition, for the better enforcement of legislation relating to children, the Labour Code provides sanctions and punitive measures for violators. For the first offence, a cash penalty and in case of recurrence a prison sentence have been envisaged in the law (arts. 175 and 176).

192. Barring specific regulations relating to child labour, children are treated like adults in terms of protection provided in the Labour Code. These young workers enjoy all protections provided in the law, especially in relation to discrimination on grounds of colour of skin, race, language and the like, and in terms of preventing forced labour and exploitation (arts. 5 and 6).

193. In line with the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the purpose of creating productive employment and increasing the technical knowledge of workers, and in accordance with the Labour Code, the Vocational and Technical Training Organization of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs offers the following training courses: training of young job applicants who enter the job market without any skill or education; training courses at Basic Job Training Centres for semi-skilled workers and job applicants; training of Instructor Training Centres for training of instructions; training at special job training centres for the disabled in collaboration with relevant organizations.

194. According to article 112 of the Labour Code the following persons are considered trainees:

(a) Those who receive training at job training centres or private vocational schools for a specific period and for the purpose of upgrading their skills;

(b) Persons who receive on-the-job training in accordance with a training contract for a period not exceeding three years, provided the age of the trainee is not less than 15 and not more than 18. The Technical and Vocational Organization offers training at 120 training centres with a capacity of 120,000 trainees annually. Considering the conditions for acceptance at the training centres, there is an age limitation. Persons in the aforementioned age group can participate at training courses. Regarding training for the disabled, for those with 45 per cent disability there are special centres.

2. Children and illicit drugs (art. 33)

195. The judicial authorities of Iran apply the severest punishment stipulated in law concerning the campaign against illicit drugs for cases involving the exploitation of children. According to the amendment of the law which was approved by the State Council of Expediency, the Minister of Education is a member of a council established to launch a campaign against

narcotic drugs trafficking production, sale and use. The Council is chaired by the President of the Republic. Iran has also signed the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the Islamic Consultative Assembly ratified it on 24 November 1991. The Government has also submitted the instrument of ratification of this Convention to the Secretary-General in December 1992. Special attention has been paid in this convention to the involvement of children and the use of illicit drugs in schools.

3. Sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation, sale, trafficking and abduction (arts. 34, 35 and 36)

196. Islam places great emphasis on the mental and psychological security of children. In Iranian families children enjoy a sound and healthy living environment in addition to the right to life. This is mainly due to the Islamic upbringing of children. Emphasis on the mother's care for children is the principal factor in the consolidation of family security and preventing sexual and other forms of exploitations of children. On the other hand, whenever a crime is committed against a child, the perpetrator will be treated the same as if the victim were an adult. In other words, the age of the victim in this respect is not a determining factor in the range of punishment inflicted upon the perpetrator.

197. Regarding legal protections in cases of abduction and concealment of babies, according to a law entitled Aggravation of the Penalty of Kidnappers Act, any person who, with the intention of exacting money, property, or with the purpose of retaliation, or for any unlawful purpose, forcibly or with subterfuge and intimidation, or any other manner, abducts or conceals a person, will be sentenced to a prison term ranging from 2 to 10 years, and in case the victim is a child under 15 years of age, the prison terms will increase from 3 to 15 years. Moreover, in accordance with article 6 of the above Act, in case of disappearances of the victim of capital punishment will not be enforced until it is established that the victim died due to the perpetration of the crime, and the guilty party will remain in prison for that reason. Hence, if after the passing of final judgement, conclusive evidence emerges suggesting that the victim is alive, then rehearing of the case may be effected.

198. In the event that before incarceration the person who has committed the crime delivers the victim to its relatives or judicial authorities, or arranges for the delivery of the child, or the complainant withdraws his complaint, then the court may mitigate the punishment of the guilty party. To ensure greater protection of children against social exploitation, the Act concerning Discretionary Punishments stipulates that whenever a person, individually or in cooperation with someone else, deserts and abandons a child in an uninhabited area, he will be sentenced to 74 lashes. However, if, due to commission of this act, the child is exposed to injuries or dies, the perpetrator will be sentenced to lex talionis, or compensation determined by the court.

D. Children belonging to minorities or indigenous populations (art. 30)

199. According to article 13 of the Constitution, the Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian Iranians are the sole recognized religious minorities who are free within the jurisdiction of the law to perform their religious services and shall act according to their cannon law as far as their personal status and religious teachings are concerned. There are 54 schools for religious minorities in Iran of which 43 belong to Christians, 7 to the Jewish minority and 4 to Zoroastrians. In addition, students of these minorities can enrol in all Iranian schools along with Iranian students. Separate facilities are provided for their religious instructions. The table below shows the number of religious minority students at different levels (1995).

Table 12. Number and levels of schools for religious minority students

Minority	Primary	Guidance	Secondary	Vocational	Total
Christian	6 657	3 995	2 266	760	13 678
Jewish	504	620	117	-	1 241
Zoroastrian	326	233	926	-	1 485
Total	7 487	4 848	3 301	760	16 604

200. Furthermore, in the educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in addition to religious teachings on the State religion, special religious books for each minority are also used in schools. These books are prepared and written by an organization affiliated to the Ministry of Education (Research, Planning and Educational Organization Office of Planning and Texbook Publication) in collaboration with authorities and using experiences and expertise of teachers from each of the minorities. Teachers belonging to the aforementioned minorities (formal and contract teachers) teach courses for the students affiliated to these minorities.